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THE BIBLE HISTORY.







"Suffer the little children to come to me, and forbid them not
for of such is the Kingdom of God." S Mark X 14

London. Burns & Lambert, 17, Portman Street, 1850.

THE
BIBLE HISTORY

FOR THE USE OF
SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PERSONS.

BY
J. M. CAPES, M.A.

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PREFACE.

THE following work has been undertaken with a view of presenting the historical portions of Holy Scripture to the minds of the young in such a form as might be best suited to their comprehension, and apart from those critical remarks and reflections which, however admirable in themselves, are found to weaken the interest of the youthful mind in the progress of the sacred narrative. On this account, no attempt has been made to elucidate every difficult passage, or to answer all those questions which would suggest themselves to older readers, but which practically interfere but little with the profit derived by children from the study of the historical Scriptures. Whatever seemed absolutely to demand explanation, has been briefly touched upon; though the author cannot hope that, in clearing up those passages which in his judgment have appeared most difficult, he will have met the wishes of all competent judges. What appears obscure to one person so often appears clear to another, that it would have been impossible to clear up *every* passage which might be thought to demand illustration, without extending the book to an excessive length. The actual words of the Bible, as found in the Douay version, have been employed to a consider-

able extent; as experience shews that the minds of the young are frequently more powerfully affected by the exact narrative of Inspiration, than by any attempts at a more modern simplicity.

The work has been revised by two Catholic clergymen, with the approval of the Right Reverend the Vicar Apostolic of the London District.

A few Prints are added, which have no pretensions as works of art, but which will aid the attention and strengthen the memory of those for whom the following humble pages are specially designed.

J. M. C.

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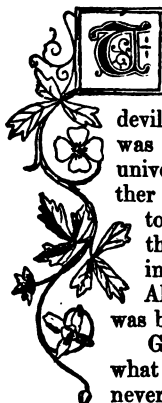


The Bible History.

BOOK I.

FROM THE CREATION TO THE CAPTIVITY IN EGYPT.

CHAP. I. The Creation of the World.



HERE was a time when nothing that we now see existed. There was no earth, no sun or moon, and no stars. There was not a man, an angel, or a devil to be found in the whole universe. Nor was there, in truth, any *universe*; for the universe is merely the whole heavens, together with the world in which we live, and together with ourselves, who live upon it, the spirits, whom we cannot see, and the inhabitants (if there are any) of the stars. All this once was not in existence. There was but one Being, that is, God.

God always was; and God always was what He is at this present moment. There never was a time when He did not exist; and there never was a time when the nature of God was changed. From all eternity He has done whatsoever it pleased Him to do, only by choosing that so it should be. We cannot comprehend *how* God has done what it has been His will to do, because we our-

selves are not God ; and only God can comprehend His own works.

Some thousands of years ago it pleased Him to create this world in which we live, and the heavens which are above us. Whether there are other worlds besides this earth, and the stars which we see, we cannot tell. All we know is what God has told us respecting Himself, and the works He has created. All that we can do without a revelation is to make guesses as to what took place in ancient times, and as to the way in which things came to be what they are. The only thing we are sure of, until God Himself instructs us, is that the world could not create itself. It must have had some Creator, or else it never would have existed.

It has not pleased God to give us any very full account of every thing that He did when He first made the world and ourselves. What He has revealed to us is as follows :—that when it was His will to make man, He first created an immense mass, or body, of what we call *matter*. It was that thing from which are made our bodies, the earth we stand on, with all it contains and that grows on it, and also the sun and stars above. It could not think, it could not move, it could not change itself ; it was neither hot nor cold, nor had it any fixed shape, and it had no light to lighten it. We cannot comprehend precisely what it was ; all we know is, that it was that thing from which our own bodies, the bodies of all animals, the plants of the ground, the solid rock, the flowing waters, and fire flame and light, the clouds, and every thing that we see, or touch, or hear, were afterwards made by God. We call it a chaos, meaning that it was a dead, shapeless, soulless mass ; but what it would have appeared to ourselves, if we had been the first beings formed out of it, we cannot conceive.

When God had thus created the matter from which He intended to make the heavens and the earth, He proceeded to shape it according to the pattern which He had formed in His own infinite mind. Why He thought fit to make it precisely what He did, rather

than to make a different heaven and earth, it is impossible to understand. He did what He thought fit, and whatever He thought fit was best.

The Bible relates the course which it pleased the Almighty to follow in changing the shapeless chaos which He had made into a beautiful world. He first created light. All hitherto was gloom and blackness, when, in a moment, a flood of light streamed throughout the whole, and utter darkness was no more. The Almighty Creator did but will that so it should be, and it was so. God then made a separation between certain portions of the chaotic mass, calling one part heaven, the other part being what we call the earth. On the earth, He next made a difference between what is solid and what is fluid; separating the dry land from the seas and rivers, and preparing the whole for the creation of trees and plants. By His almighty power He next called into existence millions and millions of these various plants and trees, not making them out of nothing, but out of the matter He had already created and prepared. To every kind of plant, from the tallest tree of the forest to the moss upon the wall, He gave a power of producing others of the same kinds by flowers and seeds. Once created, each different plant was to go on for ages and ages, continuing to spread, as it were, by itself, though all were perpetually sustained by the same will of God which first created them.

After this, the sun, moon, and stars, were formed, and made to move, together with this earth itself, in the courses along which they still run. The shapeless chaos had disappeared, and in its place the glorious sights we now see in the firmament above us assumed their present forms, and the heavens shone with ten thousand different worlds, many of them far larger in size than our own earth, but removed to such a distance from us, that only a portion of them can ever be seen by the naked eye of man. All this host of stars God made to move according to one fixed rule, which He stamped on every atom of the matter He had created; He caused the sun itself to follow the same laws by which the

smallest stone or drop of water falls upon the ground. And thus, while so much else has changed, when we look up into the heavens at night, we behold the very same sight of wonderful beauty which appeared on the first night which followed after the creation of the lights of heaven. And thus also the divisions of time were marked out for the use of the creatures whom God was going to call into existence in the world He had made. Then first there was day in every part of the earth on which the light of the sun shone, and night in every other part. Then began the first year, in which spring, summer, autumn, and winter, followed one another in exact order, lasting together about three hundred and sixty-five days. Then one portion of this earth became cold, another temperate, another burning with heat; so that in those spots where the sun shines the lowest down towards the horizon the waters became ice and snow; and in those where it rises highest over our heads the air is hot and burning, and ice and snow are never seen. The moon also then first divided the year into thirteen months, each of twenty-eight days' duration, and fulfilled her office of supplying light to the earth when the sun leaves it in darkness.

As yet, however, nothing moved upon the face of the earth. There was no life in this lower part of creation, except that inferior kind of life which belongs to the plants of the field. There was nought made to inhabit the new-born world, with all its glories and charms. The wisdom and power of God were then next exerted in filling the dry land, the waters, and the air with innumerable creatures, to move to and fro, each in their proper element, and to be supported by the fruits of the earth. And most wonderful was the boundless variety which then came forth from the hand of God. With portions of the very same matter with which He had already framed the mountains and seas, the clouds and the stars, the almighty Creator formed birds, beasts, insects, and fishes, so various in their natures, and so extraordinary both in their outward and inward bodies, that the knowledge and wisdom of man has never yet

been able to reckon them all ; and every year that passes we discover new varieties and new wonders among them. Some were large and monstrous, both in the sea and on the dry land ; whales, elephants, and other gigantic creatures, which we still see existing, swam in the ocean and trod the plains ; and besides them, many and many a monstrous animal was seen living and sporting in the woods, the valleys, and the rivers, which is now to be found no more existing alive, but whose enormous bones remain buried beneath the surface of the earth. But yet more wonderful, the very air which covered the whole world, and the waters wherever they flowed, swarmed with myriads upon myriads of beings, so small that our unassisted eyes cannot see them, and it is only by the help of modern instruments that we know that they exist. And yet more wonderful still, every one of these creatures, from the most monstrous elephant down to the insects which float invisible in the air and water, was not a mere solid mass of flesh, as it appears to our eyes when we look at it ; but its body was filled with a kind of clock-work, like the bones and muscles, the heart, veins, and lungs of our own bodies, which moved, and lived, and performed a certain fixed service, just as we ourselves move and live by means of the machinery of which God has constructed us. And the same marks of the inexpressible wisdom and knowledge of the Almighty He imprinted on the trees, shrubs, and flowers He had already formed. The miracles He wrought, in framing the burning sun and the innumerable stars, were not greater than those He wrought in the smallest bud that grows in the field. Every thing that *lived*, whether plant or animal, He made to consist of a delicate machinery, so various, so complex, and so wondrously small, that generations and generations of men lived and died, and did not even know that it existed.

And thus God ended the first part of His creation. He completed that very earth on which we live ; He made the first of every species of tree, flower, fruit, and leaf—of every bird, insect, beast, and fish—which is now

found in the world; He made them all just such as they are now, except that they were better and purer, and the animal creation did not destroy one another as they do at this day; and upon every kind of creature thus created He conferred a power of producing fresh creatures like themselves; so that there has been no new creation since the first, but God has made each new one exactly similar to those which went before, and not, as at first, out of the chaos which He had created.

CHAP. II. The Creation of Man.

BUT yet, in the almighty mysterious purpose of God, all was not complete. All was made in vain unless some other being were added to the inhabitants of the earth, which should be like God Himself, and should offer to Him its love and obedience in return for the gifts He conferred upon it. God then made man. He formed a being, possessing not only the body and the life of one of the beasts of the field, to eat, drink, sleep, and move, but He gave him also a soul. That soul was unlike all that God had yet created on the earth. The visible world was not like God Himself, except that it bore the marks of His wisdom, power, and goodness: it was of a different nature from Him who created it; for God has no body and no parts. He cannot be seen, or heard, or touched, in any way like that in which we see, hear, and touch the creatures He has made upon this earth. He is a spirit; that is, a being which can think, which can understand, which can choose, which can commence working of itself, which can distinguish between good and evil, between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood. The chaotic mass of matter which God first created could do none of these things; it was a mere material to be worked upon by one greater than itself. And so, too, with all that God created on earth before He made man. It could do nothing of itself, except that the animals could move according to their own desires, and followed certain mysterious instincts

and feelings within them. None were like God. None were capable of knowing right from wrong, of understanding who it was that created them, and of rendering to Him that service which He delights to receive. This only could be done by a spirit created after the pattern of the Almighty Himself.

Thus God crowned all His works by forming a being, partly like the lower kinds of creatures whom He had already made, and partly like Himself. He created a man, possessing a body fashioned like the bodies of animals ; and also a soul, which was not made from out of that first chaos from which his body and all the earth was framed, but which was called by the power of God out of nothing. The soul and body were united together, and God decreed that when the soul should leave the body, the body should cease to live, although the soul itself would live apart from its body. To the man thus created God gave the rule over all the creatures of the earth. He was their master and lord ; they were to serve him, fear him, be attached to him, and minister to his wants. They were to honour their Maker in the man who bore their Maker's image. They could not know God Himself, or love Him, or serve Him in any more acceptable way ; they were to worship Him by worshipping the being whom He had made in His own likeness. But they were not to die for man's food : the first man lived upon the fruits of the field, and the earth yielded him her fruits in abundance and without pain to himself. Nor did they devour one another, but, like the man whom they served, they were supported by the roots, the seeds, the fruits, and the leaves of the plants which God had created for them. All was life, joy, unity, and peace, in the works of the hands of God.

The man, however, was not designed to live alone. As the Almighty Himself regards all the works of His will with various degrees of regard and love, so He gave to the man whom He formed in His own image, a capacity for different kinds of regard and love also. One kind of love was to be bestowed on the world in which

he was placed ; another on the animals who were around him ; another upon the great and good God to whom he owed his existence ; and another upon beings like himself. For it was not the will of God that one human being alone should occupy the faultless earth He had created. Multitudes were to spring from him, to love and serve their Maker, first in the state in which they were created, and afterwards in another and better one. Therefore God created a second being, a woman, to be, with her husband, the parents of unborn generations of souls, all, like their first parents, to be afterwards raised to a nobler condition than that in which they were born, and there to live for ever. The man was accordingly thrown into a deep sleep by God, who took from his side one of his ribs, and from it created a woman, whom He gave to be companion to the man. The man was called Adam, and the woman Eve.

CHAP. III. Adam and Eve in Paradise.

WHEN the almighty Creator had thus completed the creation of man, the Bible tells us that He rested from the works He had done. That is, God ceased to create ; for in one way God ever works, every moment that passes. Although He had finished the earth and heavens, with their inhabitants, and appointed certain laws by which they should continue to exist, and increase, and multiply, and should seem to live by their own powers, yet it was only by the perpetual support and guidance of the same God who had first created them that they were preserved from destruction, and enabled to fulfil the purposes of their creation. It is the will of God which still upholds the sun and stars in the heavens, and sends them along their courses ; it is His will which gives to the seeds of plants their life and fertility ; it is His will which has filled the earth with the children of Adam up to this hour. It was only by ceasing to make or create any new species of creatures that God rested from His works. The day on which

He thus rested, He set apart for a day of rest for man. He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; and thus His Church in every age has set apart one day in seven, on which men may rest from their labours, and devote themselves to prayer and praise more than is obligatory on other days.

The dwelling-place which God gave to Adam and Eve was a garden containing every thing that was delightful to look upon and to eat of; trees, fruits, and flowers, and all that could make life most full of joy. It was called a Paradise, and its name was Eden. A river watered it; and it was to be the work of Adam and his wife to till the garden, and cultivate its fruits and flowers. But it was not in the possession of this Paradise, with all its charms, nor yet in the society of one another, that Adam and Eve were to find their truest and deepest happiness. The soul which God had given them was incapable of being satisfied, except by the enjoyment of God Himself. Every thing He conferred upon them was to be enjoyed in exact obedience to His will, and was to be loved, not for its own sake, but for the sake of Him who bestowed it. To Adam and his wife, therefore, God gave a knowledge of Himself, and of His holiness and glories. He communicated to their minds many wonderful and mysterious truths respecting Himself and their own future destinies, which they could not have learnt by their own understandings. He conferred on them the gift of speech, and taught them a language by which they might converse with one another, and adore and praise Himself. What that language exactly was is not known; but it is probable that all the languages now spoken among men are in some measure derived from it. So, too, it is not known in what part of the world the Paradise in which Adam lived was situated. No traces of it now remain; and though guesses have been made respecting its position, nothing has been handed down to us that can be relied on. All we know is, that it was in that quarter of the globe since called Asia, and in the neighbourhood of Assyria.

It was further the will of God that the eternal happiness of Adam and Eve and their posterity should depend upon themselves, and upon their obedience to what their Maker taught them. Though they were perfectly innocent when first created, it was yet in their power to sin, if they chose it. As they were able to distinguish right from wrong, so they were able to prefer the wrong to the right. They were not compelled to do the will of God, though nothing could compel them to disobey it against their own wills. God also Himself supported them in this their first innocence, by His own presence in their souls. He as it were surrounded them with His own almighty Godhead, so that every thing they could need in order to preserve their sinlessness might be granted them in an overflowing abundance. He also at times conversed with them, manifesting Himself to them in some wonderful manner, and communicating to them His will, almost as men now talk with one another.

The means by which He tried their obedience was a certain tree which grew in the Paradise in which they dwelt, and which was termed the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Of the fruit of this tree God forbade them to eat. The fruit was pleasant to the eyes, and seemed delightful to the taste; but upon their controlling their desires, and abstaining from eating it, depended all their future bliss. It was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil, because although Adam from the first could understand the difference between good and evil, he had no knowledge of evil by his own experience of it. Every thing that God had bestowed on him was good, and his natural thoughts and actions were all good also. His only knowledge of evil was this, that he knew that to disobey God in the slightest degree was evil, and that if he tasted the fruit of this tree, he *would* disobey God. Thus Adam knew all that it was desirable for him to know; for the knowledge of evil in any other way than he then knew it, is itself an evil.

Disobedience to the command thus laid upon Adam

was to be followed with instant death; that is, with spiritual or moral death, with such an instantaneous change in his nature, that the death of the body would afterwards follow as certainly as if it came the very moment that the forbidden fruit had touched his lips. And, on the other hand, it was promised to him that, if he continued faithful and steadfast for a certain time, his present condition of trial should be ended, and he should be taken to a far more glorious and perfect state of being, in which he should see his Maker face to face, and in the contemplation and love of His infinite perfections should be blessed for ever and ever. This was the twofold nature of the reward which awaited our first parents; while, in their first state, though they were innocent, yet it was possible that they should sin, and thus fall into misery; and also, though they knew God, and He conversed with them, and they were joyful and happy, yet they did not *behold* God, or were filled with that boundless joy and delight of which the soul is capable when admitted into His immediate presence.

Thus began the life of the first man and the first woman whom God created. The animals which surrounded Adam were obedient to him and gentle to one another. They were also made to pass before him by their Maker, and all of them received names from him. The earth gave forth her produce without grudging, and labour was a sweet employment, and not a painful toil. There was neither sin nor sorrow upon the earth. Happy in one another's love and companionship, and in the favour and presence of God, it seemed impossible that a change could ever come over any thing so lovely and perfect, or that the works of God, which He had Himself pronounced to be very good, should soon be smitten with an overwhelming curse.

CHAP. IV. The Fall.

How long our first father and mother continued in their state of innocence and obedience is not known.

It is thought, however, that not many days passed before the temptation assaulted them before which they fell. A tempter came in the form of a serpent. He enticed them to eat the fruit which God had forbidden them to touch, the heavy wrath of God fell upon them, and their state of joy was ended for ever.

The serpent was, indeed, but the figure which was assumed by a spirit already fallen from holiness to sin. For man was not the only being that God had created after His own likeness. Before the world itself was made, but, as it is believed, not long before, multitudes and multitudes of spirits were called into existence by the almighty power of God, not clothed in fleshly bodies like Adam, or inhabiting this earth, but yet, like Adam, capable of sinning, though sinless when first created. Of these blessed spirits—angels, as generally called—some fell from their first state, and others remained obedient. Through pride in their own powers, Satan, with an innumerable band of his companions, rebelled against the majesty of God, and were driven from the presence of God by the angels who stood faithful to their allegiance. They were banished for ever from heaven, and from angels became devils, their whole hearts being filled with hatred and malice against God and against every thing that is pure and lovely in His sight.

Thus abhorring God's will, and envying those who still enjoyed His favour, Satan could not endure the sight of the holiness and happiness of man. And as God in His wisdom permitted him to try the constancy of Adam and Eve, by putting evil thoughts before their minds, he took the shape of the serpent, and entered into conversation with the woman. Afraid, nevertheless, to put the idea of disobedience boldly at once before her, he commenced with an artful question, and asked her how it was that they might not eat of all the fruits which grew in the garden. She, not perceiving the drift of his question, replied that the forbidden tree bore a deadly fruit, and that God in His goodness had commanded them not even to touch it, lest they died.

To this the tempter answered, that God was deceiving them in foretelling such a consequence of their tasting the fruit; for that God knew that, so far from causing death, it would add wonderfully to their knowledge, and tell them of mysteries which at present were hidden from their minds. "You shall be as gods," he said, "knowing good and evil. You shall be raised at once to a higher state, like the state in which your Maker Himself is, and know what He has cruelly withheld from you." Upon this the woman began to hesitate. She asked herself whether it was possible that the serpent might be right, and that the punishment which God had threatened would not really come to pass if she ate the fruit. Then, instead of turning her thoughts to God, and asking Him, whose goodness and wisdom she already knew so well by experience, to guide her in her difficulty, she fixed her eyes upon the fruit of the tree, and considered whether or not she should venture to take it. The temptation then grew more powerful. She saw how beautiful the fruit was, how delicious it would be to the taste, and probably saying to herself that it was impossible that any thing that looked so fair and sweet could really have the dreadful consequences which God had foretold, she plucked it and tasted it. Having done this, she offered the fruit to her husband, who perhaps was standing by, and had heard the conversation between his wife and the tempter, without having the courage to interfere. The snare which had proved too deceitful for his wife, was too deceitful also for Adam. He took the fruit; ate it; and all was changed.

That instant a horrible feeling came upon their souls. They could not bear the sight of their own bodies. Until now, conscious of an unspotted purity of heart, they had felt no shame in wearing no garments. But no sooner had the fruit passed their lips, than a piercing sense of shame seized upon them. They shrank into themselves, and could not endure their natural nakedness. This, however, was but a token and consequence of the frightful change that had taken place within their hearts. In a moment they became afraid

of God. Before this, they had feared Him with the holy and loving fear of affectionate children towards their beloved Father; they had delighted to think of Him, to talk of Him, and to speak to Him; while they looked forward with joy to the hour when they would behold His glories face to face. Now all was changed. The thought of God became their torment. They could not endure to reflect that He was nigh and saw into their inmost thoughts. They did not wish to speak to Him. If it had been possible, they would have fled from Him for ever, and passed their existence in following their own disordered inclinations, without a recollection of His existence. That mysterious Divine presence in their souls which hitherto God had granted them, was no more. Their souls were left as naked as their bodies. Their minds were darkened, and the devil, to whom they had madly yielded, was undisputed master of their existence.

But they could not thus escape from the judgments of God, though they had despised His words, and believed that He could utter a falsehood. They heard a voice from God, and fled and hid themselves among the garden trees, as if God was like themselves, and could be shut out by the very works of His own hands. But the Lord God called Adam, and said, Where art thou? And Adam said, I heard Thy voice, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. He sought to deceive God with a lie, and pretended that it was from a praiseworthy modesty that he was hiding himself, and not from dread of the just wrath of God. Having committed one sin, he made himself more guilty by keeping away from God, and devising excuses, instead of throwing himself upon the Divine mercy and asking for pardon and renewal. And God said to Adam, Who hath told thee that thou wast naked, but that thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? Adam's excuse fell to the ground in an instant before the piercing truth of the words of God. But yet he would not humbly confess his sin, but tried to find another pretence for it by laying the blame upon

his wife. The woman, he said, whom thou gavest to be my companion, gave me of the tree, and I did eat. He sought impiously to cast the blame, not only upon Eve, but upon God Himself, as if it were God's fault that he had sinned, because it was God who gave Eve to be his companion. The Lord then turned to the woman, and said, Why hast thou done this? She also followed her husband's example, and excused herself by saying that the serpent had deceived her; as if it were not her own fault that she had been deceived.

Then followed that awful curse under which all men have suffered, from that day until now. God cursed the serpent, which had been the tool employed by the devil in accomplishing his guilty purposes, condemning it to creep upon the dust of the earth. To the woman He said, that sorrow and servitude should be her portion; that in sorrow she should bear her children, and be ruled by the husband whom she had tempted to sin. To the man He said, that his whole existence should be turned into painful toil, that the earth should be cursed because of his sin, and its fertility so much destroyed, that only by perpetual labour should he keep down the thorns and thistles it would bring forth, and make it yield him the support necessary for life. That death also, which the devil had persuaded him would not follow upon his eating the fruit, was inflicted upon him. In place of being taken without death from the Paradise of bliss on earth to the full presence of God in heaven, after passing many years of toil and sorrow, his body was to return to the dust from which it was taken, and his soul to be given into the hands of Satan and his devils, to be tormented in hell. The whole earth and its inhabitants was also visited with the curse which destroyed Adam and his wife. The brutes of the field and all animals learned to kill and devour one another; the elements became disordered, and storms, earthquakes, and pestilences, came to terrify and destroy both man and beast.

Within the soul of man the effects of this one sin were even more dreadful. Adam and Eve were deprived

of that grace and presence of God which had been their great safeguard, and had enabled them to control the natural desires of their flesh and their minds ; their hearts and intellects were also clouded, corrupted, and blinded ; so that lust, passion, anger, pride, revenge, envy, selfishness, and every evil thing began to work within them. God Himself was almost hidden from their understandings, and they ceased altogether to love Him ; while the little love they retained for one another was easily overcome by the love of self, which now became the chief feeling in their souls.

They were also driven shamefully from the garden in which they lived, because in it, besides the tree of knowledge, God had planted a tree of life ; a tree possessing a certain mysterious power of giving immortality to those who ate of its fruits, so that, by the law which God Himself had made, they would never die. The Lord, therefore, clothed Adam and Eve with skins, and sent them forth from Paradise, and placed angels, called cherubims, at its gate, with a flaming sword, that turned and blazed in every direction, so that none should henceforth approach or eat of the life-giving tree.

Yet the justice of God was not so far provoked as to cast off the guilty pair for ever. Though He condemned them at once, without mercy, to all the punishment which He had threatened, and though He thought fit in His incomprehensible wisdom to inflict upon all their children afterwards the same misery which He inflicted upon them, He also found a remedy for those who would embrace it. He promised that after a time a Saviour should appear in the world, who would destroy the power which the devil had now acquired over the whole race of men, and who should restore to them all the blessings they had forfeited. He said to the serpent, I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed ; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel. From the children of the woman was to be born, in after-ages, a Conqueror, who would fight with the devil, and overcome him. The enmity between Satan and men should

continue as long as the world itself should last, and man himself should have no power to escape from Satan's dominion; and even when the promised Saviour should appear, He would suffer much from the malice and fury of the devil, who would lie in wait, and as it were bite His heel. But the contest would end in the crushing of Satan's head, and the delivery of mankind from the curse now laid upon them.

And still further, though the original grace with which God had clothed the souls of Adam and Eve was stripped away, He did not quite desert them, or leave them to perish without hope. He afforded them such help, that if they would only bring themselves to seek it rightly, and would turn away from sin, and resist the power of the devil, they might still enjoy His favour, and by virtue of that victory over Satan and death, which the promised seed of the woman was to win, be finally admitted to His presence in heaven.

CHAP. V. Cain and Abel.

ON the day when Adam and Eve were driven from Paradise, which is now nearly 6000 years ago, began that life of man which, with certain outward differences, was precisely the same as we now live. The chief point of difference consisted in the length of life which God gave to Adam and his posterity for several hundreds of years. Adam himself lived more than 900 years; and Mathusala, who came in the seventh generation after him, lived nearly 1000. But by degrees the lives of men were shortened, till they came to be what they are now. The kind of life which Adam and Eve lived after they were sent forth from Paradise, it is not easy to know. It was, doubtless, a simple pastoral life, in which agriculture was their occupation, and they were also without any of those arts or sciences which in the present day make our existence so different from that of savage nations. In its simplicity, it was not unlike that of the uncivilised races which still remain in various

parts of the world. But although fallen and sinners, we cannot doubt that Adam and Eve were penitent, and served God in all sincerity, while they possessed a knowledge of God such as is never found in these times among savage races. Probably it was far happier than that of most persons until the promised Saviour came, though we can scarcely doubt that Adam and Eve must have borne to their graves the bitter remembrance that it was through them that the whole race of their posterity was cursed; and they must have mourned with deeper sorrow than their children would feel. It is likely, also, that the bodily strength and beauty which they had possessed in Paradise only left them and their descendants by degrees; and that the diseases to which we are subject were introduced slowly among men, chiefly through their own continued sins and intemperance.

The most awful proof which they experienced of the power which the devil had gained over them, was in the conduct of their first-born child. He was called Cain, and their second son was named Abel. Cain occupied himself in cultivating the ground; Abel was a shepherd, and tended flocks. It was on an occasion when they both offered special religious service to God, that the diabolical nature of sin thus appeared. Adam had been taught by God to make offerings to Him of whatever he possessed, as a token of the obedience with which he must offer up his own will and desires in order to obtain the favour of God, and as a figure of the sacrifice to be offered by the coming Saviour. On a certain day accordingly, Cain and Abel were performing this duty, Cain offering the fruits of the earth, and Abel the best of the flocks which he possessed. The Almighty, however, rejected the offering of Cain, because he did not offer it with a sincere heart. He did not sacrifice *himself* to God, but expected to satisfy Him by giving Him his riches, while he kept his heart and his will for himself. While Abel's offering, therefore, was accepted, God gave some sign that He refused what Cain gave; perhaps a voice came down from heaven, or a fire con-

sumed the sacrifice of Abel, while that of Cain was left untouched and dishonoured.

Then rose up the devil's passions in Cain. He could not endure to see his own brother favoured, while he was neglected and rebuked. Yet God bore with him, and remonstrated with him, and shewed that he was only treated with justice, and bade him repent, and do better for the future. But Satan was master in the heart of Cain. He asked his brother to walk with him into the field, and then struck him to the ground, and slew him. The voice of God then spoke terribly to his soul, and asked, Where is thy brother Abel? And Cain pretended that he could not tell, and said that he was not his brother's keeper. And God said to him, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the earth. Now, therefore, cursed shalt thou be upon the earth, which hath opened her mouth, and received the blood of thy brother at thy hand. When thou shalt till it, it shall not yield to thee its fruit: a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be upon the earth. Then Cain's soul was overwhelmed with remorse and horror at the deed he had done. He shuddered beneath the words of God, and cried out in his despair that he would be struck dead by the first person he met with on the earth. Whether there were already other children born to Adam and Eve, so that Cain feared vengeance for Abel's death from his other brothers, or whether he feared those yet unborn, cannot be said. It is supposed, however, that about 130 years had already passed since the fall, so that Cain might already have had brothers and nephews, whose wrath he feared would fall upon him. But God set a mark upon Cain, perhaps some trembling, or terrible appearance, which should at once serve to shew the greatness of his crime, and point him out as one whose punishment the Almighty had reserved to Himself. He seems to have lived the life of an outlaw to the end of his days.

Of the other children, both sons and daughters, who were born to Adam and Eve, the Bible says but little. A son of Cain is related to have "built a city;" mean-

ing, perhaps, that he was the first who raised several houses near one another, the earliest abodes being more scattered and far apart. Another descendant of Cain, Jabel, is called the father of such as dwell in tents and of herdsmen, from which we gather that he and his family began the migratory life of those tribes in the East who possess vast flocks of sheep, goats, and cattle, and move from one part of the country to another in search of pasture, living always in tents instead of fixed houses. Many such still remain in eastern countries, and a life not very dissimilar is led by settlers in lands where, as in the earliest ages of the world, there are very few inhabitants, and the soil is not divided into the property of separate individuals. Jubal, the brother of Jabel, cultivated with success the art of making and playing upon musical instruments; and another brother, Tubalcain, was a worker in brass and iron. Perhaps the beginnings of these and other arts were first taught to Adam and his children by God Himself; but nothing is recorded on the subject in the Scriptures. It appears certain, however, that all such knowledge was gained gradually by the human race as it increased in numbers.

One of Adam's posterity, Henoch, who came in the sixth generation, was exempted from the ordinary laws of mortality. He never died the death of other men. He devoted himself with such fervent piety to the love and service of God, that after a life of 365 years, which in those times was a short life, God took him from this world to Himself.

CHAP. VI. The Deluge.

FOR 1500 years the course of the world went on as it had begun. The population increased with rapidity, and all the arts of life were cultivated. It is not known how far the people of those days had spread over the earth, or whether they had penetrated into Europe. If, however, we may judge from what took place in the time of Noah, at this period men had acquired no little

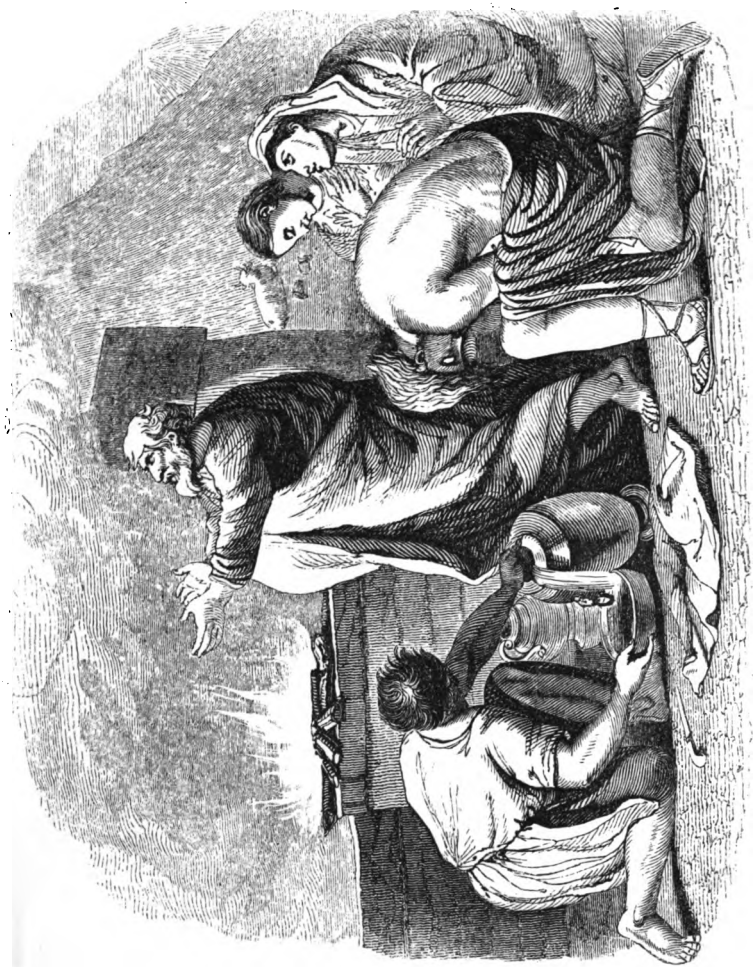
skill in ship-building, and were accustomed to lengthened voyages.

With art and science, however, sin had also increased. Every generation added to the knowledge of wickedness of that which preceded it; while every year the recollection of the knowledge of God which Adam had retained after his expulsion from Paradise was growing fainter and fainter, and becoming mingled with all kinds of absurdities and superstitions. It seems that, from the days of Cain, there had been a marked difference between his posterity and those of the other children of Adam; Cain's descendants excelling most in skill and energy of character, and those of his brothers and sisters retaining more of the knowledge of God, and more love and obedience to His will. At last, the two races began to intermingle in marriage, the great beauty of the women of the more ungodly families attracting the regards of those who were born of a purer stock; until the whole human race was given up to worldliness and sin, and in one family alone was God served and honoured. This was the household of Noah; though even here, as it afterwards appeared, there was one son out of three who was of unholy character.

At this point in the history of the world, a terrible punishment was sent upon mankind. God gave a command to Noah to prepare a large vessel, or ark, resembling the hull or body of one of our largest ships of modern times, to contain himself and some of all living creatures during a deluge which was about to drown the whole world. It was to be divided into three stages, or decks; and as it was not designed for moving from one place to another, but merely to float on the top of the waves, and to protect those who were within it, it was roofed-in like a house, in order to bear the violence of the storms of rain which were about to descend upon the earth. Its length (at the smallest measurement) was about 450 feet; its width about 70 or 80; its height between 40 and 50. In size it was, therefore, about as long and as wide as one of the old English cathedrals, and rather more than half their usual height.

Into this immense ark Noah took seven of every kind of clean beasts, and two of every kind of unclean. The distinction between clean and unclean animals had been made by God, as a figure of the difference which exists in His sight between souls that are defiled with sin, and those that are cleansed. Noah took also his wife and his three sons, with their wives and families. Seven days after he had entered the ark, the waters began to fall, and for forty days and forty nights it rained upon the earth. At length the floods rose so high, that nothing was left alive in the world; man and beast perished together; one overwhelming deluge destroyed them all. For nearly half a year the deluge remained upon the earth, when the waters began sensibly to subside. At length the tops of the mountains were dry, and the ark was lodged upon a high land in the country of Armenia, now called Mount Ararat. There Noah waited forty days longer; and in order to ascertain whether the earth was yet habitable again, he sent out a raven, which never returned. After the raven, he sent out a dove, which found no rest nor food, and soon came back to the ark. A week afterwards he sent the dove forth again, and in the evening she returned with a branch of an olive-tree in her beak, the green leaves shewing that vegetation was begun. Waiting another seven days, Noah sent her forth once more, and she never returned.

Noah thus understanding that the earth must now be dried, and fit for him to dwell upon, came forth with his family, and the animals which he had taken in with him, and beheld the world all lovely and fertile as before. Filled with gratitude to his almighty Protector for his wonderful preservation amid the wreck of all mankind, he immediately raised an altar, and offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving. And the wrath of God was appeased by the awful vengeance that He had taken, and He revealed to Noah that such a deluge as was now passed should never again destroy the world, bidding him look to the rainbow which follows upon the passing storm as a pledge that the earth should no more be



NOE OFFERS SACRIFICE AFTER THE DELUGE.

overwhelmed by a flood. The rainbow was thus the first visible token of the Divine love to man, as other pledges have been given by God in after-days, as seals of the covenant of mercy by which He has been pleased to bind Himself to save those who seek Him.

CHAP. VII. The World after the Flood :—the Tower of Babel.

It appears that at this time God first permitted men to eat the flesh of animals, while before the flood their food had consisted solely of the fruits and roots of the earth. Noah and his sons immediately betook themselves to till the ground, and among other plants cultivated the vine. Noah also pressed out the juice of the grapes, and, leaving it, it naturally fermented and became wine. Of this, Noah, doubtless knowing nothing whatever of the effects that would ensue, one day drank so largely that intoxication followed, and he fell drunk and asleep upon the floor of his tent, without decent clothing to cover him. What followed betrayed with terrible force the deep-seated wickedness of man, even after the warning which he had just received in the universal deluge. Cham, one of Noah's sons, finding his father thus lying unconscious, laughed at him with contemptuous sneers, and in his shameless folly invited his two brothers, Sem and Japhet, to share his indecent jesting at their parent's misfortune. Shocked, however, instead of amused, they reverently covered their sleeping father with a cloak; and when Noah awoke, he pronounced upon Cham one of those awful judgments by which it pleases God at times to visit generations of unborn men for the sins of their fathers. Cham and his son Chanaan were declared accursed, and were to be punished by being made slaves and servants to the children of Sem and Japhet.

The eastern parts of the world were now quickly peopled again with the descendants of Noah. But scarcely had another 100 years gone by, when a new and extraordinary proof of human folly and pride called for a fresh manifestation of God's anger against those

who lift themselves up against Him. The men of the time, finding that the spot where they had settled after the flood was becoming too confined for their increasing numbers, proposed a plan for a general emigration, in search of new and fertile countries. Before separating, however, they determined to build a monument, in honour, not of God, but of themselves. The mere erection of such a structure was, of course, in itself, perfectly harmless; it might even have been most praiseworthy, if done with a view to commemorate the origin of the whole human family, and the mercies they had received from their Creator. The sin of the builders of this monument lay in the object which they had before them, which was simply to honour themselves, to hand down to posterity their own skill, and wealth, and energy. From the very earliest ages we see men exactly what they are to this day. That very spirit of haughty self-satisfaction which makes the whole civilised world eager to raise monuments, to shew to posterity their greatness and strength, displayed itself in the erection of the very first building whose name and character is handed down to us from the remotest ages.

Like all nations in a simple state, these men intended to make the *size* of their tower immense; they said it should reach to heaven, and doubtless believed it would last as long as the world. It pleased God, however, not to leave them long in the delusion of their own greatness. He miraculously confused their speech; so that, being unable to understand each other's meaning, they could not possibly unite in carrying on the building they had begun. Until this time, all had spoken the language which God had taught to Adam. We can conceive the amazement, confusion, and shame which thus seized these haughty men, by imagining what would be our own feelings if, on meeting together some morning, every member of a family or a school should find that he could not understand his companions, and his companions could not understand him. The tower instantly ceased building. It was called Babel—a word signifying confusion; its builders dis-

persed far and wide ; and at this day not a trace of their work remains. We can scarcely even guess whereabouts it stood. Their punishment alone remains in the variety of languages which are spoken in the different nations of the world.

From this period the history of the Bible is almost entirely confined to one family, and the nation which sprung from it. And as no other histories relating to so ancient an age remain, even if ever they were written, which is scarcely possible, we can only understand the state into which the descendants of Noah fell, from the accounts which are given us of this one favoured family, and of the circumstances which befell them in their intercourse with others. All other histories, also, being written by uninspired men, contain much fable mixed up with the truths which they do relate.

CHAP. VIII. Abram and Lot.

It is in the tenth generation from Noah that the Bible again takes up the history of man, informing us of little more than the names and ages of those who came in a direct line, as father and son, between Sem and Abraham. About 500 years after the flood, Abraham (or, as he was first called, Abram) was living at Haran in Chaldea, when God renewed to him, in a most solemn manner, the covenant He had made with Adam immediately after the fall ; promising that in him—that is, in his posterity—all the nations of the world should be blessed, and that this posterity should become a mighty and numerous people. At the same time, as a trial to Abram's faith in the protecting power of God, the Lord commanded him to leave the home where he was dwelling, and go forth as a stranger and seek a new home in the land of Chanaan. This very land God also promised to bestow at a future period upon Abram's descendants. Abram,—the great excellence of whose character it was, that he depended upon the word of God, without a doubt,—strong in heroic faith, and be-

lieving against all appearances, hesitated not a moment to obey, and, with his wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot, and all his household and possessions, journeyed southwards to Chanaan.

It was not long before a famine drove the wanderers away to seek sustenance in a more fruitful territory. Egypt at this period was become an agricultural and settled country; while Abram and the inhabitants of Chanaan lived in tents, and laboured to increase their flocks and herds, who fed upon the natural herbage of the soil, rather than to cultivate corn and the fruits of the earth. When the scarcity, therefore, came on in Chanaan, Abram with all his dependants journeyed into Egypt in search of food. Knowing nothing of the character of the sovereign who then ruled in Egypt, Abram was alarmed lest the beauty of his wife Sarai should tempt him to put her husband to death, in order to make her his own wife. He therefore made her pass as his sister (as, indeed, she was his half-sister), saying nothing of her being married to him. What he had feared took place. Her beauty attracted the notice of the Egyptian monarch, and Sarai was taken, in a friendly spirit, to his house, where he would have married her, had not God smitten him and his household with sickness, or some other grievous torment. Struck with alarm, Pharaoh, as all the Egyptian sovereigns were called, remonstrated with Abram for having concealed the whole fact respecting his relationship to Sarai, and dismissed him from the country with his wife, and the presents he had already given him when he thought him only Sarai's brother.

To Chanaan Abram then returned. He was the owner of large possessions, which are described in the Scriptures as consisting of sheep, oxen, asses, camels, and male and female servants, or slaves. It is also said that he was rich in gold and silver, though it is not known whether gold and silver were yet coined into money, or were used in their natural state, in lumps, or gold and silver dust. He and Lot together occupied a spot near Bethel, where he had rested before his journey

to Egypt, and where he had then built an altar and offered sacrifice. The *patriarchal* system still prevailed. The head of each family was its sovereign and its priest, possessing the supreme power over his kinsfolk and servants, and offering to God the sacrifices which were universal throughout every people into which the race of man had been divided.

It was not long before Abram and Lot felt it to be necessary that they should part, and occupy separate spots of country. Their flocks and herds multiplied to such an extent that pasturage failed, and the herdsmen of the uncle and nephew were perpetually quarrelling. They therefore agreed to separate; Abram nobly permitting Lot to choose first where he would prefer to settle. Lot, eager only for gain, and heedless of the company he would have to keep, decided upon migrating to the neighbourhood of Sodom and Gomorrah, two towns as notorious for the infamous wickedness of their inhabitants, as for the delightful beauty and fertility of the surrounding country. There he settled; and was soon after involved in the misfortunes which befel the people of Sodom and their king. The whole country was divided into petty kingdoms, each governed by an independent prince, or king; and, as is usual in such circumstances, was subject to perpetual quarrels and wars. Not long after Lot had fixed his dwelling in Sodom, the sovereign of that town, with four others of the neighbouring princes, was defeated in battle by four other allied chiefs, who followed up their victory by marching upon Sodom, which they plundered, and carried away its inhabitants. Among the rest, Lot was taken into captivity; and the news of his misfortune was quickly carried to his uncle, Abram. Abram instantly armed all his servants and followers, above three hundred in number, attacked the victorious princes in the night-time, put them to flight, and set free his nephew Lot, with all the captives, who returned to Sodom. On his way back to his own abode, Abram was met by Melchisedech, the king of Salem, the priest of the One True God, who solemnly blessed Abram, and offered bread

and wine, as a symbol of that perfect Sacrifice hereafter to be offered for the sins of men.

CHAP. IX. The Covenant with Abram.

WITH all the riches and power which were in the hands of Abram, as yet he was without a son. Already was one portion of God's promise being rapidly fulfilled, and earthly fortune flowed in upon him on all sides; but still no child was born to him, and his wife was grown so old that it seemed impossible that he should ever be the father of the mighty nation which God had foretold should descend from him. Still Abram doubted not; and the Almighty, who ever rewards with yet greater gifts those who employ well the graces He gives them, from time to time renewed His solemn declarations, not only that Abram's posterity should be innumerable, like the sand on the sea-shore, but should possess that very land in which they now dwelt as strangers, and should be the chosen people of the Most High, from whom the Saviour of the world should spring.

On one occasion in particular, God confirmed His promise by a miracle which He wrought before Abram's eyes. By the Lord's command, Abram had offered a solemn sacrifice, and at sunset a deep sleep fell upon him, and in a vision God told him that his children should be in bondage in a strange land for 400 years, and should then be set free, and take possession of the land of Chanaan. And when the sun was gone down, a flashing fire and smoke, the symbols of the presence of the Almighty, passed between the fragments of the bodies of the animals which had been offered, and gave token to Abram that God was there.

Still no children were born to him, and his wife began to doubt the fulfilment of God's promise; and in her foolishness she thought she would cause it to be fulfilled in her own way, and gave her handmaid Agar to Abram to be his wife;—for in those times men were

often permitted to take more than one wife, and it was not till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ that the rule of Paradise was restored, and it was forbidden ever to marry a second wife while the first was living. Agar, however, now expecting to be the mother of the promised seed, grew proud and contemptuous towards Sarai, and forgot that she was still her mistress. But Sarai treated her with such severity, with Abram's permission, that Agar fled from her home into the wilderness, where an angel met her and bade her return, promising her from God that though her son should not be the father of the promised nation, yet his children should become a great people, and should never be subdued in war. Returning then to Abram's house, Agar became the mother of Ismael.

At this time, God made His most solemn covenant with Abram; that special covenant on account of which we ourselves, who are Christians, are called Abram's children, and which was the figure of that baptism by which Almighty God now enters into covenant with His chosen people. Already Abram was close upon a hundred years old, when he beheld one of those awful visions of the Almighty which at times were vouchsafed to men. God is said to have *appeared* to Abram; not that He shewed him all His infinite glory, or what is mysteriously called the *face* of God, for ordinarily none can behold the glorious face of God while they are in this world, without being overwhelmed by His awful majesty. But by some miraculous appearance God shewed to Abram that he was in the immediate presence of the Most High; and while Abram fell prostrate on the earth before his God, the Almighty renewed His promises, and revealed Himself by that name by which He signified His eternal power and godhead. God said to him, "I AM;" by which expression He signified that He alone exists uncreated; He alone exists by His own proper rights and nature; He alone existed from all eternity; and from Him, and according to His will, is every thing made that is made. As a sign, or sacramental token, that henceforth Abram and his family

were to be accounted the peculiar chosen people of God, God also commanded Abram to circumcise himself and every male person in his house. He further changed the name of Abram to Abraham (which means *a father of a multitude*), and the name of Sarai to Sara (which means *lady or princess*). Abraham then pleaded in behalf of his son Ismael, entreating God that he might share the blessings of the promised child, not yet born. Yet he pleaded in vain, for God would work out His own will by His own chosen means; and He repeated to Abraham the promise that Sara herself should have a son, and should call his name Isaac.

Again God conversed with Abraham. He was reposing in his tent during the heat of the day, sitting by its door, and, it may be, pondering upon the wonderful promises of God, and wondering how they would be fulfilled, when he lifted up his eyes, and what seemed three men, strangers and travellers, stood before him. But though they bore the look of men, and seemed to need refreshment in their journey, either their heavenly appearance, or a voice in Abraham's soul, told him that they were not men, but angels; and that one of them was the especial representative of the Almighty God Himself. He prostrated himself before them upon the ground and worshipped them, and then invited them to rest on their journey, and wash their feet, and eat and drink. In Eastern countries, where sandals are worn instead of shoes, and the great heat of the country fills the roads and fields with hot dry dust and sand, it is ever the custom to offer water to wash the traveller's feet; and to perform the office itself of washing them is accounted a mark at once of honour and of affection.

The angels then said to Abraham, "Do as thou hast spoken." And he went and called Sara, and bade her prepare a meal with all speed. Such was still the custom, even with men of Abraham's rank, wealth, and power. The difference between the master and the servant, the mistress and the handmaid, was little in comparison with our modern habits. She, who was almost a queen, herself prepared with her servants the dinner

for the guests, and Abraham himself waited upon them. He set before them three cakes baked on the hearth, veal, milk, and butter, and stood by while they ate under the shade of a tree.

When they had eaten, one of the angels said, "Where is Sara thy wife?" And he answered, "She is in the tent." And the angel said, speaking in the name of God, "I will return and come to thee, and Sara shall have a son." Which, when Sara heard, she laughed behind the door of the tent, thinking it impossible that at her great age she should be the mother of a child. And the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sara laugh? Is there any thing hard to God?" And Sara heard it, and coming out, she denied that she had laughed, for she was afraid, and thought that her laughter had been secret. But the Lord said, "Nay, but thou didst laugh." And the angels rose up and departed, Abraham accompanying them some distance on their journey towards Sodom.

CHAP. X. Sodom and Gomorrah.

ON the journey it pleased Almighty God to grant to Abraham another of those wonderful favours with which He recompensed his devotion and faith, and the zeal with which he brought up his household in the fear of God. At a certain point two of the angels walked forwards towards Sodom; the other, in whom Almighty God Himself was speaking, remaining with Abraham, who stood in the Divine presence, reverently awaiting the commands of God. As they had been walking, God had already told him that an awful judgment was about to come down upon the guilty cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and that He was going to smite them with His heaviest vengeance. And now Abraham ventured to plead for mercy with the Almighty for his miserable fellow-creatures. He said to God, "Wilt Thou destroy the just with the wicked? If there be fifty just men in the city, shall they perish withal; and wilt Thou not spare that place for the sake of the fifty just, if they be

therein? Far be it from Thee to do this thing, and to slay the just with the wicked, and for the just to be in like case with the wicked, this is not beseeeming Thee: Thou, who judgest all the earth, wilt not make this judgment. And the Lord said to him: If I find in Sodom fifty just within the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake. And Abraham answered, and said: Seeing I have once begun, I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes. What if there be five less than fifty just persons? wilt Thou for five-and-forty destroy the whole city? And He said: I will not destroy it, if I find five-and-forty. And again he said to Him: But if forty be found there, what wilt Thou do? He said: I will not destroy it for the sake of forty. Lord, saith he, be not angry, I beseech Thee, if I speak: what if thirty shall be found there? He answered: I will not do it, if I find thirty there. Seeing, saith he, I have once begun, I will speak to my Lord: what if twenty be found there? He said: I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty. I beseech Thee, saith he, be not angry, Lord, if I speak yet once more: what if ten shall be found there? And He said: I will not destroy it for the sake of ten. And the Lord departed, after He had left speaking to Abraham: and Abraham returned to his place."

Meanwhile, in Sodom itself, the iniquity of the inhabitants was rising to its highest pitch of frantic passion. The two angels entered the city in the evening, and were hospitably received by Lot; but, before the night had commenced, an uproar began in the streets, stirred up by the horrible desires of the men of the place; and they surrounded Lot's house, and insisted upon his giving up his two guests to be the victims of their ferocious passions. On Lot's refusing, the tumult grew greater, and the people were proceeding to break into his house, when the angels from within smote them with blindness; and horror-struck, but not penitent, the crowd ceased from their violence. The angels then bade Lot gather together his family, and flee without a night's delay from Sodom, if he would escape the

vengeance which God was about to take upon the place. Lot, who, with all his weakness and his love of wealth, was at heart a man who feared God and believed His word, instantly went out to call the men who had married his daughters to flee with him; but they laughed at him for his credulous folly. With the earliest dawn Lot then left the place, urged by the angels to the utmost speed, and accompanied only by his wife and his two daughters.

That morning Sodom and Gomorrah, and the whole surrounding country, were destroyed by a flood, not of water, but of fire. God spared neither man, nor woman, nor child, nor plant, nor beast of the field. One overwhelming conflagration blotted them out from the face of the earth. From the heavens above, and from the ground below, the flames burst forth; and when Lot looked back again from the hills upon the country below, he beheld ashes, fires, and smoke, as if the whole valley had been changed into a raging furnace. His own wife also had been involved in the awful punishment. Disobeying the words of God, which bade her flee without tarrying to look behind, she turned, and lingered, and watched the destruction of the scenes she had left. But the same judgment which smote Sodom smote her. Wrapped in the furious storm of fiery salt, her life was instantly destroyed; and she sunk on the ground, or stood petrified, no longer a human being, but a "statue of salt." And to this day the country where Sodom and Gomorrah stood is the most fearful place in the entire world. A large lake, called the Dead Sea, thrown up by the convulsions of the earth, fills the spot where the guilty cities sunk; the air is oppressive, and often so intolerably hot and poisonous, that it can scarcely be approached; the waters are heavy, from being mixed with nauseous salts and bitters; and though it is possible to sail upon the lake for a short time, to live upon it would be impossible for man or bird. The country all round bears the marks of an appalling visitation of fire; the springs that trickle down the rocks into the sea are foetid and sulphurous; and its bottom,

when examined by soundings, shews that it was originally a level plain and dry land.

CHAP. XI. The Birth of Isaac. Abraham's Sacrifice of his Son.

IN due time the promise of God to Sara was fulfilled, and Isaac her son was born. Ismael, however, refusing his younger brother due respect, she urged her husband not to suffer him to remain in the house, and to dismiss the child and his mother to wander forth into the world. Harsh and cruel as it seemed to the father thus to banish his own son from his presence, and wretched as was the lot inflicted upon Agar, God enjoined Abraham to follow his wife's counsel, and Abraham obeyed. Agar departed with her child and a little store of provisions into a desert place, where hunger and thirst speedily seemed about to end their sufferings, and the mother, heart-broken, laid her boy down, and turning away that she might not see him die, lifted up her voice and wept. Then she saw that God, who had commanded her to be driven forth from Abraham's home a houseless wanderer, was Himself watching over her and guarding her, while all seemed most desolate. An angel called aloud to her from heaven, and bade her lift up her eyes, and shewed her a well of water, commanding her to give the child to drink, and renewing God's promise that he should live and become the father of a mighty people. And her child revived; and in after-time married a woman of Egypt, and became renowned as an archer, and as the father of the Ismaelites.

Isaac, the favoured and chosen son, grew up meanwhile in his father's house. But it was not many years before the faith of Abraham was tried by a trial far more severe than any that God had yet laid upon him. On a sudden he received an order from the great God of justice, truth, and mercy, to offer up his own child Isaac as a burnt-offering. That very son, the son of his old age, from whom God had promised to raise up

the great people that was to be born of him, was himself to be slain as a victim in his childhood, and consumed by fire upon an altar as an offering to God. Yet Abraham's faith never failed. With his heart torn and bleeding, and his understanding struck with amazement and terror at the awful methods by which God was working out His own holy yet mysterious purposes, he took his child and led him to the mountain which God had pointed out for the sacrifice. On the way there the innocent boy inquired the meaning of these strange preparations. "Behold, my father," he said, "here is the fire and the wood, but where is the victim to be sacrificed?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide Himself a victim." And they came to the place which God had appointed, and Abraham built an altar, and laid the wood in order upon it; and he bound Isaac's hands and feet, and laid him upon the altar, as a lamb prepared for the sacrifice; and he stood in the presence of God with a sword in his hand, ready to slay his son.

Then was the sacrifice complete. It was not the intention of God that the father should take his son's life; it was his own *will* that he was to sacrifice; and that he had now offered, strong in faith, and persuaded that, even if Isaac died, God could yet raise him up children from the dead. There was to be but one human sacrifice ever offered up to God, and of that sacrifice Isaac was a figure or type. At the moment, therefore, when Abraham stood prepared to strike his beloved child, an angel called to him from heaven, and bade him stay his hand, for that his trial was ended, and the Almighty God was satisfied. Lifting up his eyes, Abraham then saw a ram caught among the brambles, and he took it and offered it instead of his son. And once more God spoke to him from heaven, and renewed His ancient promise, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Near this very spot, eighteen hundred years afterwards, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ offered Himself upon the cross, a true and all-perfect sacrifice for the sins of men.

The days of Abraham and his wife were now drawing to their close. At the age of 127 years Sara died, and Abraham buried her in a cave which he purchased from the inhabitants of the country. His name had already become so great among them, and was regarded with so much respect and affection, that the people of Heth, to whom he applied for a spot wherein to bury his dead, besought him to accept it as a free gift. Probably, however, because he would do nothing whatever that might seem like a mingling of his own family with those of the neighbouring tribes, Abraham courteously refused the offer, and paid for the cave and the field where it was situated, and there he buried Sara.

Hastening also himself to the same grave, he now made arrangements for the marriage of Isaac; and again we see the care with which Abraham preserved his own chosen stock from intermixture with any blood but his own. He called his chief servant Eliezer, and making him a kind of guardian to his young son, he bade him swear that he would never suffer Isaac to marry a wife from the families of the alien and idolatrous Chanaanites among whom they were dwelling, and despatched him to seek a bride for Isaac from among his own relations in Mesopotamia. This oath was confirmed by a singular ceremony, in which the servant placed his hand under his master's thigh, and declared that he would be faithful to his word.

Eliezer then departed with camels, and presents for the bride whom he should choose. He journeyed straight to the place where Abraham's brother Nachor was living, and there, standing by a spring where he saw that the damsels of the town would come to draw water, he prayed to God to grant him a sign to shew who it should be whom he should choose for Isaac's wife. He prayed that whatever maiden should offer water for himself and his camels when he asked for it, she should be the bride whom he was to seek at her relations' hands. Scarcely had he ended his prayer, when Isaac's cousin Rebecca, the granddaughter of Nachor, a young and beautiful virgin, came forth to the spring

and filled her pitcher. And Eliezer ran and entreated her to let him drink. She instantly lowered her pitcher from her head and gave him to drink, and offered him water for his camels also. And Eliezer's mind was filled with doubt, joy, and surprise; and he pondered in himself what to do. At length he asked the maiden her name; and when he found that she was of the very family of his master's brother, all his fears passed away, and he felt convinced that God had heard his prayer, and that Rebecca was the chosen bride for Isaac. Then he offered her earrings and bracelets of gold, and begged her to take him to her father's house. And she ran and told her family all that had happened. And her brother Laban came out and welcomed Eliezer gladly; and when they had all heard his story, they recognised the hand of the Lord in what had taken place, and Rebecca's father and brother agreed that she should become Isaac's wife. The day was ended with feasting and rejoicing; and Eliezer presented the gifts he had brought for Rebecca and her kindred. In the morning he prepared to depart, though they would fain have detained him a few days; but Rebecca herself begged no delay, and they returned to Isaac. It was evening on the day when they reached the dwelling-place of Abraham, and Isaac was in the fields meditating. As they drew near he saw the camels approaching; and Rebecca catching sight of Isaac, asked who it was; and when she heard that it was her future husband, she wrapped herself, as the maidens do in the East, with her mantle, and was presented to Isaac as his bride. She dwelt in Sara's tent, and Isaac loved her, and was comforted in her love for his mother's death.

At the age of 175 years Abraham died, and was buried by his wife's side in the cave he had bought of the children of Heth.

CHAP. XII. Jacob and Esau.

It was not until twenty years after their marriage that any children were born to Isaac and Rebecca. At that

time two sons were born to them, twins; the elder, a strong, red, and hairy child, was named Esau; the younger was called Jacob. As they grew up, a great difference appeared in their tempers and characters: Esau loved hunting and husbandry, and was hot and careless in his feelings; Jacob was calm, calculating, and peaceful, living more at home in the quietness of his father's tents. The father loved Esau the better of the two, and Esau often brought him venison from his hunting; and Rebecca loved Jacob.

On a certain day, by what seemed a most trifling domestic occurrence, the purposes of God were accomplished in the two brothers in the most mysterious way. By the usual order of things, the blessing of being the father of the posterity promised to their grandfather Abraham would have belonged to Esau, as the eldest brother. But he, in his reckless, eager fondness for present pleasure, little heeded the glorious distinction to which he was born, and cared nothing for his birthright; while Jacob, though far from being a faultless man, yet was more serious than his brother, and thought more of the future than of the present hour. On this day he was at home, and had prepared some pottage from lentils, when Esau came in, faint and exhausted from the fields, and begged Jacob to give him the pottage to eat. Sell me thy birthright for it, said Jacob in reply. And Esau, wearied and careless, and fancying that if he could not get the pottage instantly he should die, and so his birthright would be profitless, in his folly and thoughtlessness agreed to the bargain, and eating the pottage, went his way, little recking that he was now become the younger son instead of the elder, and had lost every blessing to which his birthright gave him a claim.

Notwithstanding this bargain, there were yet many earthly advantages which still would have been Esau's, through that solemn blessing with which he expected his father Isaac to bless him before he died. Whether Isaac knew of what had taken place between his sons or not, does not appear from the Bible narrative; but

it is certain that he had still a certain right of primogeniture to bestow upon one of his sons, and this it was his intention to confer upon Esau, and not upon Jacob. In one of those mysterious events, in which man's folly and sin work out the hidden purposes of God, and He, who from eternity has foreseen all the actions of all mankind, employs our frailties and even our iniquities as ministers to His will, the whole amount of blessings which would have been Esau's, if he had not sold his birthright to his younger brother, were transferred to Jacob, though at the same time with one of those bitter penalties which ever accompany the gains of those who prefer to do God's will not in God's ways, but in their own.

Isaac growing old, felt that the time was come for him to bestow that solemn blessing which he had yet to give to his first-born son. Already his eyes were so dim that he could not see, and every thing admonished him that his time of departure was at hand. He therefore called Esau, and bade him go into the field, and kill him some game, and cook it and bring it to him, after which he would bless him in the sight of the Lord, before he died. But as soon as Esau was gone from his father, Rebecca, who had heard the conversation, resolved that Jacob should take his brother's place, Isaac's blindness making it just possible to deceive him into mistaking Jacob for Esau. She instantly prepared a dish of goat's flesh, cooked in the way that Isaac liked, and dressing Jacob in Esau's clothes, sent him in to his father to appear before him as if he was Esau himself returned from hunting. Jacob, indeed, trembled at the thought of being discovered, and foresaw that if his father discovered the deception, he would receive a curse and not a blessing. But Rebecca bade him not be afraid, and said, "Upon me be this curse, my son." She also covered his smooth hands and his neck with the hairy goat-skins, that when his father touched him, he might suppose that it was really Esau, who was an extraordinarily hairy man.

To his father Jacob then repaired, and said: "My

father. And Isaac said : Who art thou, my son ? And Jacob said : I am Esau thy first-born : I have done as thou didst command me : arise, sit, and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said to his son : How couldst thou find it so quickly, my son ? He answered : It was the will of God that what I sought came quickly in my way. And Isaac said : Come hither, that I may feel thee, my son, and may prove whether thou be my son Esau or no. He came near to his father, and when he had felt him, Isaac said : The voice indeed is the voice of Jacob ; but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he knew him not, because his hairy hands made him like to the elder. Then blessing him, he said : Art thou my son Esau ? He answered : I am. Then he said : Bring me the meats of thy hunting, my son, that my soul may bless thee. And when they were brought, and he had eaten, he offered him wine also, which after he had drunk, he said to him : Come near me, and give me a kiss, my son. He came near, and kissed him. And immediately as he smelled the fragrant smell of his garments, blessing him, he said : Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a plentiful field, which the Lord hath blessed. God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, abundance of corn and wine. And let peoples serve thee, and tribes worship thee : be thou lord of thy brethren, and let thy mother's children bow down before thee. Cursed be he that curseth thee : and let him that blesseth thee be filled with blessings. Isaac had scarce ended his words, when, Jacob being now gone out abroad, Esau came, and brought in to his father meats made of what he had taken in hunting, saying : Arise, my father, and eat of thy son's venison ; that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said to him : Why ! who art thou ? He answered : I am thy first-born son Esau. Isaac was struck with fear, and astonished exceedingly ; and wondering beyond what can be believed, said : Who is he then that even now brought me venison that he had taken, and I ate of all before thou camest ? and I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed. And when

Esau heard these awful words, he cried with a cry of terror and anguish, and said : Bless me also, my father." But the words of the father were gone forth. He could not revoke them. He felt the hand of God in what had taken place ; he recognised in Jacob not only the father of the promised race, but the master and lord of his kindred ; and he could only promise to Esau that he should be rich and powerful, and that in after-ages his posterity should shake off the yoke of the posterity of Jacob.

The hatred of Esau against Jacob now became insupportable to Rebecca. He made little secret of his intention of murdering Jacob as soon as his father should be dead ; and Rebecca, trembling for her beloved child, persuaded Isaac to send him away to her own relations in Mesopotamia, there to seek a wife, and to dwell till Esau's fury was passed away.

CHAP. XIII. Jacob's Marriages, and his return home.

JACOB, thus an exile from his father's house, hastened to the country where his uncle Laban dwelt. His mother, who had prompted him to deceive his father, was driven herself to plan a scheme for sending him away from her sight, and passed her old age deprived of the society of her beloved son. On reaching Haran, Jacob received a miraculous proof that he was under the special protection of Almighty God. Falling asleep, he beheld a ladder reaching from the earth to the heavens, and on it were bands of angels ascending and descending ; a token to him, that though destitute of human friends, he was surrounded by the mercies of God, and that His angels ever ministered to him. At the same time the voice of the Almighty was heard, confirming to Jacob all the privileges of the birthright which Esau had thrown away, and promising to him that his seed should possess that very land on which he now slept a homeless wanderer, and an exile from his father's house. Awaking from his sleep, he cried, How terrible is this

place ! This is no other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven ! And he set up the stone which he had been using for a pillow, as a memorial of the vision, pouring oil upon it to consecrate it to the honour of the merciful God who was his guardian, and vowing a vow of obedience to the Lord.

Arriving at the house of his uncle Laban, he met his youngest daughter Rachel, tending her father's flock, and immediately formed a deep affection for her. Returning with her to her home, he entered into an agreement with Laban, of the same kind which to this day prevails in the very country where this took place ; he undertook to serve Laban as his farm-servant, living in his house, but receiving no wages, on condition that at the end of seven years he should receive Rachel as his wife. For seven long years he therefore laboured for Laban in content : they seemed to him but a few days, because of the greatness of his love. But when the time appointed was passed, Laban made a great feast, and all the ceremonies of the marriage were gone through, when behold ! Jacob found that Laban had deceived him, and that he had married Rachel's elder sister, Lia, who was as plain in countenance as Rachel was beautiful. To Jacob's complaints, Laban replied that, if he would serve another seven years, like the first, he should marry Rachel also, as soon as the seven days of the marriage ceremonies were over ; and Jacob, rather than lose Rachel altogether, consented.

But Lia, thus married to a husband against his will, experienced the fate which her father might have expected for her, and was neglected by Jacob, whose whole heart was with Rachel. God, however, had compassion upon Lia, and gave her six sons, while Rachel remained childless. At length, He also heard Rachel's prayers, and she bore a son, and called his name Joseph. Soon after Joseph's birth, Jacob determined to return to his own country, his fourteen years of service to Laban being ended, and he was weary of his situation as a servant in the house of his kinsman. For a certain payment, however, he remained six years more, at the end

of which time he determined to depart. During the last few years he had become so rich and prosperous, that Laban had grown jealous of him, and Jacob was afraid that he would do every thing in his power to prevent his departure. Again and again Laban had taken every possible advantage of him; but God had so blessed Jacob that Laban's flocks and herds had many of them passed fairly into his hands; and now he dared not tell Laban that he was going. Accordingly, seizing his opportunity, while Laban was away from home sheep-shearing, he fled as a fugitive from his uncle's house, with his wives, his children, and all his possessions. Rachel also stole her father's idol-gods, and carried them secretly away with her, saying nothing of the theft to her husband.

Three days after Jacob's departure Laban heard the news, and, full of astonishment and vexation, followed after Jacob; and as the latter could travel but slowly, through the number of persons and cattle that he had with him, Laban soon overtook him. He earnestly remonstrated with him for his flight, and asked him why, if he must go himself, he had stolen his idols. Jacob replied, that he dared not tell Laban that he was going, fearing that he would have kept his daughters back by force, and that as to his idols he knew nothing of them; but that Laban might search his baggage, and whoever should be found having them in his possession should be put to death. Rachel then hid the idols among her camel-furniture, and sat down upon it, and when Laban came to search, excused herself from rising up, under the pretence that she was not well enough to stand. Laban, believing the excuse, of course found nothing; and when Jacob chid him for bringing a false charge of theft against his people, Laban was reconciled, and they parted friends.

Jacob now proceeded on his journey, and as he came near his own country, he became afraid of his brother Esau's vengeance, and sent messengers forward to speak peaceably to him, and entreat his forbearance. But hearing that Esau was advancing to meet him with a band of

400 men, his fears were redoubled, and he divided his followers and cattle into two divisions, hoping that at least one of them might escape the violence which he dreaded from his brother. At the same time he sent forward a present of several hundred sheep, goats, cattle, and camels to Esau, hoping thus to win his favour.

That night, when all his arrangements were concluded, being alone, another manifestation of the Divine favour was vouchsafed him. He met what seemed to him a man, who struggled with him, and wrestled with him until daybreak. The stranger, however, could not master Jacob, whose strength appeared too great for him; yet, when the day began, he touched the sinew of Jacob's thigh with his hand, and that moment the sinew withered up and shrank. Still Jacob held the stranger in his gripe, for he saw that it was not a man, but an angel, who was wrestling with him, and that some wonderful meaning was hidden beneath the miracle. When the angel therefore said, "Let me go, for it is break of day," Jacob answered, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And the angel said, 'What is thy name?' And he answered, 'Jacob.' And he said, 'Thy name shall not be called Jacob, but Israel;¹ for if thou hast been strong against God, how much more shalt thou prevail against men?' And when Jacob asked his name, he would not tell him, but blessed him in that same place. And Jacob said, 'I have seen God face to face, and my soul has been saved.'" The whole occurrence was a miracle, to shew to the patriarch and to his descendants, both Jews and Christians, that it is the will of God that they should, as it were, wrestle with Him in prayer; and that as man is conquered in a struggle by one that is stronger, so God will suffer Himself to be vanquished by those who say to Him in love and faith, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." It was also directly designed to assure Jacob of the conquest he would gain over the prejudices and anger of Esau.

Thus signally honoured and protected by Almighty

¹ The word 'Israel' means one who is a prince, or who prevails with God.



power, Jacob went forth to meet his brother. And Esau's heart was touched with kindness, and he received Jacob with open arms, and clasping him about the neck, fell on his face and wept. In the afternoon, he returned to his own abode at Seir; and Jacob following slowly after him, settled at Salem, in the land of Chanaan. There, however, it was not long before his daughter Dina was foully outraged by the son of the ruler of Sichem; and Jacob's two sons, Simeon and Levi, took so frightful a vengeance for the crime, that Jacob dared no longer stay in the country, but moved on to Bethel, where he settled. At the same time he purged away from his followers the idolatrous practices which were frequently creeping in among them; for clear and strong as was the faith of Jacob himself in the one true God, it is plain that many of those who were about him were in perpetual peril of falling into the idolatry of the neighbouring tribes. Laban, his uncle, we have seen, had idol-gods in his house; and even Rachel herself appears to have set a superstitious value upon her father's images, and probably stole them under the idea that she would be benefited by having them in her possession. Still, it seems that in all these cases the religion of Jacob's kindred was not a rank and unmixed idolatry, or denial of the one only God, Jehovah; but rather a vain superstitious veneration for certain inferior gods, or supernatural powers, and such a regard for images as is forbidden to be paid to any created thing.

At Hebron, Jacob once more saw his father, Isaac, who still survived in extreme old age; and there Isaac died, when 180 years old, and was buried by his sons Jacob and Esau. Before this, Jacob had lost his wife Rachel, who died in giving birth to her second son, Benjamin.

CHAP. XIV. Joseph and his Brethren.

THE sorrows of Jacob were now multiplied, and his children became his greatest affliction. Though he had gained the birthright, and was under the special pro-

tection of the Almighty, his life on earth was a mourning pilgrimage from the hour when he fled from his father's house. Calm, prudent, gentle, and affectionate in nature, and full of trust in the goodness of God, he ever bowed his head before the storm of affliction, and lived in hope of that future world, where alone his trials would end.

Many of his sons had already caused him bitter grief and pain, but now, when they were finally settled in Chanaan, they filled his cup of sorrow to the brim. The two sons of Rachel, Joseph and Benjamin, were objects of jealousy and dislike to the rest of their brothers, and at last Joseph's presence became so odious to them, that they resolved to be rid of him at all costs. The immediate cause of their passionate hatred was two dreams which were sent to Joseph by God. In one he dreamed that he and his brothers, who were eleven in number, were binding sheaves of corn together in the field, when his own sheaf stood upright, and all his brothers' sheaves bowed down before it. In the other, he saw, as it were, the sun and moon and eleven stars worshipping him. Even his father was displeased at what he conceived to be Joseph's insolent pride, in thus fancying that he was to be obeyed by his father, mother, and brethren, which was the interpretation they put upon this second dream. Nevertheless Jacob afterwards pondered the thing in his mind, for we can scarcely doubt that Joseph's general conduct was as far as possible from pride and insolence, while his brethren, Benjamin excepted, grew more envious than ever.

At last an opportunity came for gratifying their vengeance. They were tending their flocks at a distance from home, and one day his father sent him to inquire how they were, and to ask if all was well with the cattle. But no sooner did they see Joseph approaching, than the devilish thought entered the minds of some of them, that they would kill him, and tell his father that a wild beast had devoured him. To this the eldest of them, Ruben, objected; and he proposed that they should cast Joseph into a neighbouring pit, and leave him, he him-

self intending secretly to take him out again, and restore him to his father. To this they agreed, and stripping Joseph of the coat he wore, which was of various colours, and had been made for him by his father, they let him down into the pit. Ruben then went away on some business of his own, and the rest sat down to eat. Just then a company of travelling Ismaelites passed by, and Juda, who was one of the best of Jacob's sons, immediately suggested that it would be better to sell Joseph as a slave to these Ismaelites, than to leave him to perish in the wilderness. As all they desired was to get rid of Joseph, and they had no wish to murder him for murder's sake, this proposition was agreed to, and Joseph was taken up, sold to the travelling Ismaelites, and by them carried into Egypt, where he was again sold to Putiphar, a high officer in the service of Pharaoh the king. Ruben, returning and finding the boy gone, was torn with anguish; and the rest, taking Joseph's coat, smeared it with the blood of a kid, to make it appear that Joseph had been rent in pieces by a wild beast. They then took it to their father, and told him the falsehood they had invented. And Jacob, tearing his garments, and putting on sackcloth (as was the custom in those countries at a season of great affliction), wept and mourned for Joseph with all a father's bitterness of grief.

CHAP. XV. Joseph in Egypt.

WHILE anguish thus filled the heart of Jacob, and his guilty sons rejoiced in the absence of their brother, Joseph's lot was strange and wonderful. His abilities and singular uprightness, placed as he was in the midst of the idolatrous and licentious Egyptians, rapidly won for him the affection and esteem of his master Putiphar. Though still young, he was soon advanced to the highest post in his master's family, and became his house-steward and the head of his whole establishment. After a while the wife of Putiphar, a wicked and unscrupulous

woman, formed a sinful passion for the young steward, who was remarkably comely in appearance, and whose fair Mesopotamian countenance was as unlike the swarthy, hard-featured Egyptian face, as his upright and pure mind was unlike their debased and selfish souls. In vain, however, she tempted Joseph to sin. She wearied him with her solicitations; but the fear of God and duty to his master made him close his ears against the tempter; and, on one occasion, he rushed vehemently from her presence, while she seized his upper cloak or coat, and kept it in her possession. Then, boiling with rage and disappointed passion, all her feelings were turned into hatred of Joseph, and she falsely accused him to her husband of having used violence to her, shewing him Joseph's garment, which she had seized, as a proof of the truth of the accusation. The falsehood was believed by Putiphar, and Joseph was dismissed from his offices and cast into prison.

In prison the Lord was still with Joseph. The same sweetness and integrity which had won his master's regard touched the chief gaoler, and the captive Joseph was made superintendent of all the prisoners; and as in Putiphar's household, every thing that Joseph did in the prison seemed to prosper. At length it was the will of God to set His servant free, and employ him, in the fulfilment of His divine purposes, for the preservation of his own father and the brethren who had so cruelly used him. In the prison with Joseph were two servants of Pharaoh, the chief butler and the chief baker, both of whom, for some offence, were committed to gaol, and placed by the head gaoler in Joseph's custody. One night each of these men dreamed a dream, which troubled him exceedingly, so that in the morning Joseph inquired the cause of their more than usual sadness. They told him their dreams, and at the same time a revelation from God shewed to him what the visions signified, and he supplied them with the interpretation. The butler had seen a vine growing, from which he gathered the grapes, and squeezed them into a cup, and presented the juice to the king. This, said Joseph, was

a sign that the butler would be restored to his former situation. The baker had dreamed that he carried on his head three baskets, in the uppermost of which were all kinds of baked meats, which birds came and ate. By this Joseph informed the baker that his death was foretold. The events justified the interpretations. In three days the butler was taken into favour, and the baker was put to death. Joseph himself remained in prison, the butler forgetting a promise he had made to intercede for him with Pharaoh.

Two years more he lingered in his captivity, forgotten by man, but reserved by God for His special service. At the end of two years two dreams struck terror into the heart of the Egyptian monarch himself. He saw seven cows, fat and beautiful, feeding by the bank of the Nile, which was the great river of Egypt; and as they fed, seven others, lean and ill-favoured, came up and devoured them. He saw also seven full and beautiful ears of corn growing upon one stalk; and then appeared seven others, blasted and thin, from the same stalk, which destroyed the beauty of the former seven. In the morning the king summoned the most skilful men of his court, whose occupation it was to impose upon the credulity of their fellow-countrymen by pretending to interpret dreams and visions, and he asked them for an explanation of what he had seen. But they were confounded, and could give no interpretation. Then the chief butler's conscience smote him, and he remembered Joseph; and he told Pharaoh how a young man in prison had explained his own dream two years ago. Immediately Joseph was summoned to Pharaoh's presence, and the monarch related to him his dreams. And the hand of God was with Joseph, and he saw the interpretation of the visions. The seven fat cows and the seven full ears, he said, were seven years of plenty about to commence; and the seven lean cows and the seven thin ears were seven years of famine, which would follow after them. And he urged the king to spare no pains, during the years of plenty, to gather together such abundant stores of grain as would keep the people from

starvation during the dearth that would visit the whole land of Egypt.

Instantly Joseph's destiny was changed; from a captive lingering in a wretched prison, he became ruler of Egypt. Pharaoh could think of no person so fit to take the necessary precautions against the future famine as he who had foretold its coming. With all that startling quickness with which such changes are made in half-civilised nations, he at once raised Joseph to the post of his chief minister, a post which in the East confers a sovereignty over the whole kingdom, inferior only to that of the actual monarch. Clothed in rich garments, with Pharaoh's own ring upon his finger, and with a circlet of gold about his neck, the liberated bond-slave, the victim of his brothers' cruelty, rode through the streets of the Egyptian capital in solemn procession, and assumed the government of one of the mightiest nations of the world. He married the daughter of the priest of the City of the Sun, and was thus allied with that haughty hierarchy who held the highest rank among the various classes into which the Egyptian population was divided. Without delay he matured his plans for the preservation of the country; and for seven years together built vast warehouses, and laid up enormous stocks of grain from the extraordinary abundance which for that period was yielded by the land.

At last the famine came. Egypt and the surrounding countries, as far as Chanaan, became barren, and the earth refused her fruits. No rain fell, or, at least, it was so scarce, that the Nile, whose yearly overflowings watered a large portion of all Egypt, and gave it the wonderful fertility it generally possessed, ceased to rise above its banks; and not only the Egyptians, but the people from other lands, came flocking to the Egyptian minister for supplies of corn. For some reason or other, however, which the Bible does not record, Joseph adopted a policy in distributing the corn he had collected which entirely changed the whole state of property and taxation throughout the dominions of the Egyptian monarch. Instead of giving the corn for no-

thing, he sold it to persons of every class, the priesthood alone excepted. The price he put upon it was such, that long before the famine was over, the whole nation had parted, not only with their money, cattle, and movable property in the purchase of food, but with their lands also ; so that the king was become the absolute owner of every thing in the entire kingdom. It is probable that, before this, the territorial system of the country was thoroughly bad, and needed a fundamental reform, and that Joseph seized the opportunity for effecting, by means of the famine, the changes necessary for the prosperity of the nation. Having thus acquired possession of the whole land of the kingdom, he let it out again to its former owners, on the condition that, from that time forward, they should pay a rent to the king for it, consisting of one-fifth part of the produce. This was far from an exorbitant demand, and probably placed the whole population in a better position than they had enjoyed before the famine commenced.

CHAP. XVI. Joseph's Brethren come to Egypt.

EARLY in the course of the famine, tidings came to Jacob's ears that corn was to be sold in Egypt. Of the advancement of Joseph to the government of the country, neither he nor his sons knew any thing ; for Joseph had no doubt taken an Egyptian name on his elevation and marriage, and to foreigners was known as an Egyptian, and not as the son of a stranger in Chanaan. When Jacob, then, sent his ten eldest sons to Egypt to buy corn, they little imagined who it was to whom they were making petition, though they were admitted to his presence, and conversed with him. Joseph, however, knew them in a moment ; and he adopted a device for gently punishing them for their sins against himself, and also for securing a visit from his youngest brother Benjamin, whom his heart yearned to see. He pretended to disbelieve the account they gave of them-

selves, and called them spies, whose real object it was to discover the present defenceless state of the country. And when they repeated their story, and told him that they had a father and a younger brother still left at home, he yet professed to believe that they were spies, and put them all in prison for three days. Then, bringing them out of prison, he said to them, that to try whether the story they told him was true, he should take one of them and keep him a captive, while they went home and told their father, and brought back their youngest brother, in order to shew that they were not uttering falsehoods. Then their hearts smote them for the sin they had committed long ago against Joseph; and they lamented over their wickedness, while Joseph stood by listening to their words, which, as they talked to one another in the Hebrew language, they little thought that he could understand.

Still Joseph would not yield, though his heart was moved, and he turned away from them and wept. Then returning, he took one of them, Simeon by name, and had him bound before their eyes; and he then sold them the corn they wanted, and dismissed them. At the same time he gave his own servants orders to put each man's money secretly into his sack of corn; so that when at night on their journey they opened one of their sacks to feed their beasts, to their astonishment they found the money there in the sack's mouth. Still greater was their amazement and fear, when, on reaching home, they found that every sack had its owner's money tied up in it with the corn. And bitter was their father's grief when they told him that Simeon was left in bondage, and that unless Benjamin went with them on their next journey, they would have no more corn, and must perish.

At length the corn they had brought was all consumed. Long did the heart of Jacob refuse to part with his beloved child Benjamin; but at last he yielded to the remonstrances of his sons, and gave him into Juda's hands, who pledged himself to bring him back in safety. And they returned to Joseph, taking double

money, in order to restore the money they had found in their sacks, and likewise a present of spices for Joseph. On their arrival, Joseph's steward treated them kindly, and bade them not be afraid because of the money they had found in their sacks, and brought out Simeon to them. "And they made ready the presents against Joseph came at noon; for they had heard that they should eat bread there. Then Joseph came in to his house, and they offered him the presents, holding them in their hands, and they bowed down with their face to the ground. But he courteously saluting them again, asked them, saying: Is the old man your father in health, of whom you told me? Is he yet living? And they answered: Thy servant our father is in health, he is yet living. And bowing themselves, they made obeisance to him. And Joseph lifting up his eyes, saw Benjamin his brother, by the same mother, and said: Is this your young brother of whom you told me? And he said: God be gracious to thee, my son. And he made haste because his heart was moved upon his brother, and tears gushed out: and going into his chamber he wept. And when he had washed his face, coming out again, he refrained himself, and said: Set bread on the table." Then they sat down apart from the Egyptians, because the Egyptians despised the Hebrews, and would not eat at the same table with them. To their astonishment also they were placed in the order of their birth, from the eldest to the youngest; and a portion of meat was sent to Benjamin five times as large as that which was sent to each of the rest. And they feasted and drank, and were merry.

The next day they took their sacks full of corn, and all departed in peace. But Joseph had ordered his servants secretly to place the money in the sacks, as before, and to put his own silver drinking-cup into Benjamin's sack. Then scarcely had they left the city, when Joseph's steward overtook them, and charged them with stealing his master's cup. Frightened at the accusation, they bade him search their sacks, and declared that the owner of the sack in which the cup should be

found should become Joseph's bond-slave. When the sacks were opened, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack, rending their garments, and pierced with sorrow, they returned into the city to Joseph. And they threw themselves on the ground before him, and Juda entreated for mercy for his brother. But Joseph would not hear, and declared that he should keep Benjamin, and send the rest away. And when Juda vehemently, and with all the tenderness of a brother's heart, prayed to be permitted to remain himself in bondage, that Benjamin might return, and spoke of the misery which the loss of his youngest child would bring upon his aged father, Joseph could no longer forbear. He commanded that all should go out, and no stranger be present while he made himself known to his brethren. "And he lifted up his voice with weeping, which the Egyptians and all the house of Pharaoh heard. And he said to his brethren: I am Joseph: is my father yet living? His brethren could not answer him, being struck with exceeding great fear. And he said mildly to them, Come nearer to me. And when they were come near to him, he said: I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Be not afraid, and let it not seem to you a hard case that you sold me into these countries: for God sent me before you into Egypt for your preservation. For it is two years since the famine began to be upon the land, and five years more remain wherein there can be neither ploughing nor reaping. And God sent me before, that you may be preserved upon the earth, and may have food to live. Not by your counsel was I sent hither, but by the will of God: who hath made me as it were a father to Pharaoh, and lord of his whole house, and governor in all the land of Egypt. Make haste, and go ye up to my father, and say to him: Thus saith thy son Joseph: God hath made me lord of the whole land of Egypt: come down to me, linger not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Gessen: and thou shalt be near me, thou and thy sons, and thy sons' sons, thy sheep, and thy herds, and all things that thou hast. And there I will feed thee (for there are yet five

years of famine remaining), lest both thou perish, and thy house, and all things that thou hast. Behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaketh to you. You shall tell my father of all my glory, and all things that you have seen in Egypt: make haste and bring him to me. And falling upon the neck of his brother Benjamin, he embraced him and wept: and Benjamin in like manner wept also on his neck. And Joseph kissed all his brethren, and wept upon every one of them: after which they were emboldened to speak to him. And it was heard, and the fame was abroad in the king's court: The brethren of Joseph are come: and Pharao with all his family was glad."

And Joseph sent them all away with corn and rich gifts to his father, and conveyances to bring him and all his property into Egypt. And when Jacob heard that Joseph was ruler over all Egypt, he cried, "It is enough, if Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him, before I die." And he, and all his sons and his daughters, and his grandchildren, and his servants, went down into Egypt. And Joseph met him in Gessen, and fell on his neck, and they wept together. And the whole family of Jacob, now called Israelites, were settled by Joseph in Gessen, a separate division of the kingdom of Egypt, because they were shepherds by occupation, and the prejudices and pride of the Egyptian people made them despise all whose calling it was to feed cattle. There they were supported by Joseph as long as the famine lasted. There also Jacob died, at a great age, having called together his twelve sons, and from his death-bed pronounced a blessing upon them, adding prophecies of future punishment and condemnations for past sins in the case of some of them, and specially foretelling that the sceptre of a national existence should not depart from the children of Juda until the promised Redeemer was born from among them. His sons carried his body into Chanaan, and buried him in the burying-place where Abraham and Sara were buried. Joseph himself died at the age of 110 years, first bind-

ing his kindred by an oath, that whensoever they should leave Egypt, they should carry his bones with them.

CHAP. XVII. The History of Job.

THUS ends the first great portion of the history of mankind and of the chosen people of God. The Bible, however, records the piety, trials, and rewards of another of the ancient patriarchs, who lived in the East about this period, or at a somewhat earlier date. In a part of Edom called Huz, resided a chief or prince named Job, whose piety was in striking contrast to the licentiousness and idolatry of the general inhabitants of the country. His riches were very great; he had a large family of sons and daughters; and in every respect was one of the most prosperous of men. At length Satan was permitted by God to tempt Job's patience to the uttermost, by heaping upon him every calamity, short of actual death, which his malice could devise. Yet Job was prepared for the snares that the enemy of his soul was devising for him; for it is said that he continually offered up sacrifices to God on behalf of his children, fearing that, in the excitement of their worldly prosperity and pleasure, they should be forgetting God, and drawing down His wrath upon them. And thus, when the hand of God was laid upon him, and Satan strove to bring him to blaspheme God in wrath because of his afflictions, Job's soul was already strengthened; his prayers returned into his own bosom; and God, who suffered Satan to tempt him, suffered him not to tempt him beyond his strength to bear.

First, all his property was destroyed; plunderers seized his oxen, camels, and asses, and slew his servants; and lightnings struck his sheep. Then his sons and daughters were killed by a tempest, which shattered the house where they were feasting, and crushed them all to death; and lastly, thinking that by this crowning misery he should bring Job to rebel against the goodness of God, Satan obtained leave to smite him with a loath-

some disease, which covered him with ulcers from head to foot. Yet Job murmured not, though the wife of his bosom became his chief tormentor, and mocked at him for what she called his weak simplicity, and bade him curse God and die. Stripped of his wealth, and loathsome in his body through his sickness, he sat upon the ground, and was visited by three of his friends. Their comfort, however, was such as to add only to his misery; instead of binding up the wounds of the soul, which the hand of God had inflicted, they aggravated his sufferings by imputing them all to his great guilt; and argued with him, day after day, urging him to admit that it was as they said. But Job, though bitterly lamenting his miseries and the day when he was born, and confessing the greatness and holiness of God, and the sinfulness and nothingness of man, maintained his own integrity and uprightness of heart. This he did, not in pride, or denying that he was a sinner, but against the false accusations of utter ungodliness which his friends laid to his charge. Then a fourth friend came, and though angry with the three former accusers of Job, still he blamed Job, and condemned him for asserting his innocence.

At length God himself spoke, and, in a miraculous voice, condemned the accusers of His faithful servant; and while He declared His own almighty power and majesty, and the nothingness of man, He vindicated Job from the charges brought against him; and, in return for the steadfastness with which he had held fast to his duty in the midst of such bitter calamities, gave him large possessions, a numerous family, and a great reputation among his fellow-countrymen.

A large portion of the Book of Job is written in verse in the original Hebrew; and scarcely any part of the whole of Scripture contains more wonderful or instructive descriptions of the greatness and glory of God in His visible creation. It is to be remarked also, that on one of the occasions in which Job replies to his friends' harsh charges, he declares his belief, not only in a future state of happiness, but in the resurrection of the body

also ; declaring that, through the power of a Redeemer, he should in his flesh see God. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," he said ; "and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God : whom I myself shall see ; and my eyes shall behold, and not another."

BOOK II.

THE DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

CHAP. I. The Birth of Moses, and his Mission to the Israelites.

MANY years after Joseph's death, the affairs of his kindred underwent a total change. The king who now sat on the throne of Egypt, and who, like the other Egyptian monarchs, was called Pharaoh, abhorred the Israelites as much as the Pharaoh who had been Joseph's friend had respected them. The natural dislike of the Egyptian people to a shepherd race broke forth as violently as ever, and nothing could exceed the misery to which the children of Israel were reduced. And the more they increased in numbers, the more jealous of their prosperity and strength were Pharaoh and his subjects, dreading lest they should take part with any foreign people who might invade Egypt. Yet they would not consent to their leaving Egypt in peace, but preferred retaining them as slaves; and they sought to reduce their numbers to a less formidable amount by all kinds of cruelty. Pharaoh set them to build various immense public works and new cities; tormenting them still more by forcing them to toil beyond their strength in brickmaking and other laborious tasks. Still all was vain. The more the Israelites were persecuted, the more quickly they multiplied, till at last Pharaoh resolved to have every newborn male child thrown into the river Nile.

At this time a child was born to a woman of the tribe, or descendants, of Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, who contrived to hide her infant from his murderers for three months. At length, when she could conceal him no longer, she made a little basket of bulrushes, and put the babe in it, and laid him gently

down among the water-plants that grew by the river's bank. His sister also, who was several years older, was stationed hard by, to watch and see what would become of the child. By and by the king's daughter and her maidens came down to bathe, and found the child lying in the basket. Her heart was touched with pity, for she guessed that the babe must belong to one of the Hebrew women; and while she was looking at it, the child's sister, who had seen all that had passed, came up and begged to be allowed to call a Hebrew woman to be the child's nurse. To this Pharaoh's daughter consented, and the girl ran and called her own mother. When the mother was come, the king's daughter, not knowing that the child's mother was before her, gave him to her to nurse, and adopted him as her own child, calling him by the name of Moses, which signifies one who is taken out of the water. When Moses was grown up, his mother returned him to the king's daughter; and he lived under her protection, favoured and prosperous, while all his fellow-countrymen were persecuted and in misery.

An occasion soon offered on which he shewed that his heart was with his suffering kindred, notwithstanding all the luxuries he enjoyed in Pharaoh's house. He one day saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew; and in his indignation at the tyranny, for the Hebrew dared not resist, he struck the Egyptian and slew him, thinking no one was near. The next day he saw two of his own fellow-countrymen quarrelling, and tried to reconcile them; when the man who was in the wrong said, "Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?" Hearing this, Moses was filled with fear, finding that what he had done had got abroad. Pharaoh also heard the story, and would have killed Moses in return, had he not fled instantly from the palace and taken refuge in a distant country, the land of Madian, where he married the daughter of Jethro, the priest of the country, and undertook the duties of a shepherd to his father-in-law.

At length the time came when it was the will of

God to deliver his people from their captivity. Moses was grown old in the service of his father-in-law, whose flocks he continued to tend, when one day, driving the sheep into the inner parts of the desert country, to a mountain called Horeb, a wonderful sight met his eyes. He saw a bush burning with fire, yet not consumed. And as he went near to see what could be the cause of the wonder, a voice called him by name from the midst of the flame. And when Moses replied, the voice bade him put his shoes off his feet (which is the Eastern way of shewing respect), because the place on which he stood was holy. Then the voice, which was the voice of God, spoke again to him and said, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he durst not look while God manifested Himself to him. Then the Lord said to him, that He had pity upon His people in Egypt, and would deliver them from their oppressors, and He bade Moses go himself and be their deliverer.

But Moses trembled at the thought of the duty thus laid upon him, and said, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? I shall go to them and say, The God of your fathers hath sent me. And if they say, What is His name? what shall I say to them?" The knowledge which the Israelites had retained of the true God was still so much mixed up with false ideas of other gods, that Moses foresaw that when he told his countrymen that the God of their fathers had sent him, they would suppose that this was some new god, or some one god more powerful than the rest, and would demand to know his proper name. And God replied to him, by declaring His eternal power and godhead, as He had before done to Abraham. He spoke of Himself by those awful words, which mean that God has no need of any name to distinguish Him from other gods, for that He alone is God. He said to Moses, "I AM WHO AM. Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, He who is hath sent me to you." At the same time He foretold to him that Pharaoh would not heed his words, and

that not until God had smitten Egypt with many terrible punishments would the Egyptians let the Israelites go free; but that at last they should even drive them forth, with presents of gold and silver and jewels.

Still Moses was afraid, and foresaw that his countrymen and the Egyptians would not believe what he should say to them. God, therefore, vouchsafed a miracle to convince him, and as a pledge of the miracles which he himself should work in the land of Egypt. He bade Moses cast the rod he carried in his hand upon the ground; and in an instant it was changed into a serpent. Then He bade him take it up again; and as he took it in his hand it was turned into a rod. And again the Lord said, Put thy hand into thy bosom; and Moses put it into his bosom, and brought it out white with the disease called the leprosy. And God said, Put it back into thy bosom; and he brought it out again healed from the disease. And with these and with another miracle, by which water would be turned into blood, the almighty Deliverer of His people promised to uphold His servant Moses, and to compel the haughty Pharaoh to let them depart from their bondage. Then Moses returned, and took his wife and his sons who had been born to him, and with the rod in his hand he returned into Egypt. And as he came near, he was met by his brother Aaron, who was eloquent in speech, and who was therefore appointed by God to be the companion of Moses in his interviews with Pharaoh, because Moses himself was slow in speaking; and they went together and called the chief men among the Israelites, and related what God had said to Moses, and Moses repeated the miracles which God had wrought in Horeb to convince them. And they believed, and fell down, and adored the Lord.

CHAP. II. The Plagues of Egypt, and the Departure of the Israelites.

THEN Moses and Aaron went and demanded to see Pharaoh, and they said to him, Let My people go, that

they may sacrifice to Me in the desert. But Pharaoh laughed at their presumption, and bade them go to their own labours, instead of hindering the people from their appointed tasks. He was also so irritated at their interference that he gave orders for making the sufferings of the Israelites more severe than ever ; and they were now compelled themselves to find the straw which they employed in making bricks, at the same time that they were bound to deliver in the same number of bricks to their taskmasters as when the straw was found for them. This had the effect of rousing the anger of the Israelites against Moses and Aaron, and they laid upon them the blame of all this fresh cruelty they had to endure.

The Lord then bade Moses and Aaron commence the terrible plagues with which He was about to punish the obstinacy of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. They went to Pharaoh, and first displayed before him the divine power with which they were entrusted, by changing the rod of Aaron into a serpent before him. In those times the art of magic was practised, as now, in heathen nations ; and in some cases it pleased God to allow magicians and wizards to perform real miracles, through the power of the devil, whose servants they were. On the present occasion the magicians of Egypt were summoned by Pharaoh to his presence, to meet Moses, and to reply to his miracles by their diabolical magic. When Moses, then, took Aaron's rod, and changed it into a serpent, these men took rods of their own, and did the same. But the power of God to control the workings of diabolical wickedness was instantly shewn by a second miracle, and the serpent which had sprung from Aaron's rod devoured those of the magicians. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he remained obstinate in his disobedience.

The next day Moses and Aaron met him by the river's bank ; and Aaron, with his rod uplifted, struck the water in the king's presence, and in a moment it became a torrent of blood. But the magicians again did the same with their enchantments, and the king's heart was still hardened.

Seven days afterwards, a second plague was sent upon him. An innumerable multitude of frogs sprung up from the river, and filled the houses of all the people, from the king's palace downwards, swarming into their beds, and over their tables, and over their very food itself. And the magicians did the same; but Pharaoh was now moved, and called Moses and Aaron, and promised that the Israelites should depart, if they would only drive the frogs away. This, therefore, they did; but so soon as the plague was ceased, Pharaoh returned to his wickedness, and refused to suffer the people to go.

Plague then followed plague, as Pharaoh again and again promised to permit the Israelites to leave the country, and again and again broke his word the moment the plague was taken away. Countless swarms of lice and of flies infested the air, and tormented the bodies of man and beast; a murrain fell upon the cattle of every kind, and destroyed them in immense numbers, while the cattle of the children of Israel remained untouched; a disease of boils broke out upon the bodies of the Egyptians; storms of hail, rain, and lightning destroyed the crops of corn throughout the land; and locusts came and ate up every green thing that the hail had spared; and lastly, a great plague, a supernatural darkness, which left light in the houses of the Israelites alone, displayed the awful power of that God against whom the king of Egypt and his people were madly contending.

At length, the final judgment was to come down upon the heads of the guilty nation. At a certain hour Moses foretold to Pharaoh that the first-born of every Egyptian family, even down to the eldest of every species of beast, should suddenly die. In the mean time, by the special directions of the Almighty, Moses gave orders to the Israelites to make ready for their departure in a moment. They were to take in every family a lamb without spot, and to eat it with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, and with their garments girded round them, and with their staves in their hands, as tokens of the haste with which this mysterious feast was to be celebrated by men

on the point of starting for a journey. For seven days also previous to the feast they were to put away all leaven from their houses, and to eat unleavened bread alone, as a token of that purification of the soul from all mixture of sin with which God wills that His creatures should commence the journey of life. And when the lamb was slain, the people were to take a bunch of the herb called hyssop, and dipping it in the blood of the lamb, were to sprinkle the door and doorposts of each of their houses. And God promised that when the destroying angel, whom He was about to send to smite the Egyptians, should see this blood he would *pass over* the house, and leave its inhabitants in safety and peace. The lamb itself was the figure of the Redeemer who had been at the first promised to Adam and Eve, and whose blood was to save mankind from eternal death, as the blood of the paschal or passover lamb, now sprinkled on the Israelites' doors, was to save them from the stroke of the avenging angel.

This, then, was done as Moses directed ; and all preparations being made for the journey, the lamb was sacrificed and eaten on the evening of the appointed day, the blood was sprinkled on the doors, and at midnight a cry arose throughout the whole land of Egypt, for there was not an Egyptian house in which there was not some one dead. And Pharaoh and his people were stricken with horror, though not with true penitence ; and they would not delay an hour, but rose up and drove the Israelites from the land ; and gave them all the clothing, and the silver and gold, which, by Moses' command, they asked for ; and the very next morning the whole multitude of the Israelites, numbering now not less than 600,000 persons, besides children, with all their possessions, left the land of Egypt. And God spoke to Moses, and bade him enjoin the people to keep this feast of the Paschal Lamb, with the same solemnities, year by year, for ever afterwards, as a memorial of their wonderful deliverance from the hands of their tormentors.

CHAP. III. The Passage of the Red Sea.

THUS the children of Israel, after a captivity of 430 years, passed out of the land of their bondage. And God gave them a perpetual guide and token of His presence, in a cloud which hung over their camp by day, and went before them wherever they marched; and at night, instead of the cloud, He sent a pillar of fire. And the cloud and the fire never failed, so long as they continued their journeyings to the promised land. Scarcely were they gone from its borders, when Pharaoh and his subjects began to lament that they had so easily let them depart. After so long a possession of them as slaves, in which they had enjoyed all the fruits of their labours, they were not even yet prepared to relinquish them without a struggle. Accordingly the monarch gathered together an army of war-chariots and horsemen, and pursued the departing Israelites at their utmost speed. When they came in sight of them, the Israelites, who were ever ready to doubt the promises of their God, notwithstanding all the wonders He had done for them, trembled at the thought of a return to their captivity, and murmured against Moses with passionate complaints. "Perhaps there were no graves in Egypt," they cried, in angry mockery; "therefore thou hast brought us to die in the wilderness: why wouldst thou do this, to lead us out of Egypt?"

And Moses said to the people: Fear not: stand, and see the great wonders of the Lord, which He will do this day: for the Egyptians whom you see now, you shall see no more for ever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace. And the Lord said to Moses: Why criest thou to Me? Speak to the children of Israel to go forward. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch forth thy hand over the sea, and divide it; that the children of Israel may go through the midst of the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the heart of the Egyptians to pursue you: and I will be glorified in Pharaoh, and in all his host, and in his chariots, and in his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I

am the Lord, when I shall be glorified in Pharaoh, and in his chariots, and in his horsemen. And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, removing, went behind them : and together with him the pillar of the cloud, leaving the fore-part, stood behind, between the Egyptians' camp and the camp of Israel : and it was a dark cloud, and enlightening the night, so that they could not come at one another all the night. And when Moses had stretched forth his hand over the sea, the Lord took it away by a strong and burning wind blowing all the night, and turned it into dry ground : and the water was divided. And the children of Israel went in through the midst of the sea dried up : for the water was as a wall on their right hand and on their left. And the Egyptians pursuing, went in after them, and all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and horsemen, through the midst of the sea. And now the morning watch was come : and behold, the Lord looking upon the Egyptian army through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, slew their host, and overthrew the wheels of the chariots, and they were carried into the deep. And the Egyptians said : Let us flee from Israel : for the Lord fighteth for them against us. And the Lord said to Moses : Stretch forth thy hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and horsemen. And when Moses had stretched forth his hand towards the sea, it returned at the first break of day to the former place : and as the Egyptians were fleeing away, the waters came upon them, and the Lord shut them up in the middle of the waves. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots and the horsemen of all the army of Pharaoh, who had come into the sea after them, neither did there so much as one of them remain. But the children of Israel marched through the midst of the sea upon dry land : and the waters were to them as a wall on the right hand and on the left : and the Lord delivered Israel in that day out of the hands of the Egyptians. And they saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore, and the mighty hand that the Lord had used against them : and the people feared

the Lord; and they believed the Lord, and Moses His servant.

Then Moses and all the people sang to God a song of praise; and his sister and the Jewish women went out with timbrels and dances, and sang before the Lord, and said, "Let us sing to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider He hath thrown into the sea."

This wonderful deliverance, thus wrought by God for His people, is a figure of that still more wonderful deliverance which God grants to all His people by the Christian sacrament of baptism. The captivity of the Israelites in Egypt was a figure of that bondage to sin in which we are all involved by nature, through the sin of Adam. Pharaoh and the Egyptians were to the Israelites what Satan and the devils, his followers, are to us; our rulers and our tormentors, who enjoy all the fruits of the labours we undergo in their service. Moses was to the Israelites what our Saviour Jesus Christ is to us; a deliverer, who leads us to that heavenly Chanaan, that promised land of heaven, where we shall be at rest for ever. The flight of the Israelites from their enemies is the type of the flight of the repentant sinner from sin and Satan; and the miraculous passage of the Red Sea represents that deliverance from the powers of Satan and sin which the Holy Ghost confers on the Christian by baptism. The wilderness which the Israelites entered after they had crossed the sea is the figure of our present life in this world, which is but a desert, at its best; and lastly, the land of Chanaan, to which the journeyings of the Israelites through the desert led them, is that eternal home which awaits the faithful in the presence of God in heaven.

CHAP. IV. The Quails, the Manna, and the Water from the Rock.

NOTWITHSTANDING all that God had done for the Israelites, their hardness of heart and unbelief never left them, and they were ready, on the slightest pretence, to mur-

mur against Moses and Aaron, to disbelieve the promises of God, and to fall into some abominable sin. So obstinate, indeed, was their misconduct, that of the whole multitude who left Egypt only two persons were permitted ever to enter the promised land of Chanaan. For forty long years God, in His anger, kept them wandering to and fro in the wilderness, until every soul but these two was dead.

Their first murmuring began only three days after they had rejoiced over their deliverance in the Red Sea. At a place called Mara they found the water all bitter and unfit to drink, and angrily complained to Moses. A miracle, however, was wrought for their relief, and a tree cast by Moses into the water by God's command made it sweet and wholesome. By-and-by they were in want of food, and immediately lamented over the flesh-pots, and all the various meats and vegetables which they had enjoyed in Egypt. God then sent immense flocks of quails (a bird something like a partridge), and a miraculous food called *Manna*, from the Hebrew word, *Manhu*, meaning, "What is it?" for they knew not what it was. It appeared on the ground in the morning, looking like a hoar frost; but when examined, it proved to be a small grain, like coriander-seed, and tasting like flour mixed with honey. This they found upon the ground every morning, except on the Sabbath-day; and each person gathered enough for the day's consumption, what was left on the ground melting away when the sun grew hot. Moses at the same time bade them never lay by any of the manna at night-time for the next day's use; because they were bound to believe that God Himself would find them food each day as it came. Some, however, paid no attention to the order, and kept the manna through the night; but in the morning it was found to be putrified and full of worms. This, however, never happened to that which was laid by on the evening before the Sabbath, when they were desired to lay by a certain quantity for use on the Sabbath-day. A vessel also was filled with the manna by command of Moses, to be preserved as a me-

morial of God's care of His people; and this continued sweet for hundreds of years afterwards. And during the whole time of their sojourn in the desert, the people were supported upon this food from heaven. It was the figure of that more than angel's food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ; which, in after times, was to be given by God to His people in the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to nourish, not their bodies only, but their souls, for immortality.

Another miracle also was wrought for the support of the Israelites, which was in like manner a figure of the life-giving streams which flow from Christ upon His faithful servants. At a spot in the desert, named Raphidim, there was found to be no water; and when the people murmured, Moses himself forgot for a while his humility and patience, and cried angrily to God, "What shall I do to this people? Yet a little more, and they will stone me." And God bade him strike the rock Horeb with his rod, that very rod with which he had worked his wonders in Egypt; and from the rock thus stricken there flowed forth streams of water for all the people.

Here, too, the Israelites experienced God's protection against human foes. The Amalekites attacked them; and while the battle went on, Moses, with Aaron and Hur, mounted to the top of the hill, and Moses held up his hands in prayer to God for the success of the Israelites against their enemies. And as long as he lifted them up Israel prevailed in the fight; but when through weariness—for Moses was now of a great age—he could hold them up no longer, the people began to give way before the Amalekites. Aaron and Hur then placed Moses upon a stone, on which he sat, while they two held up his hands until the sun went down, when the Amalekites were routed and fled with a terrible slaughter.

CHAP. V. The Law of Moses.

THREE months after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt they came to Mount Sinai, where it pleased

God to give them the laws which they were to obey, as His chosen people, until the promised Saviour should come into the world. Some of these laws were already binding upon them, and were always binding upon the whole race of men, being what are called *moral* laws; laws which are taken from the very nature of Almighty God Himself, and which command man to imitate the perfections of his Maker, so far as they can be imitated by a creature in this world. Others were of a different kind, and were designed by God to keep up the true religion among the children of Israel, and to preserve them separate from all the rest of the world until Jesus Christ should be born. For the Israelites alone were to be the chosen people of Almighty God until the Saviour came, who would break down this distinction between them and the rest of mankind, and call people of every nation to enter into the number of His people. Not that it was impossible that any persons except the children of Israel should be saved; for we read in the Bible of different persons who, though living among the heathen, yet served and loved the one true God, and thus were under His favour and protection. The great purpose of the separation between the Israelites (also called Hebrews) and the rest of mankind (who were called Gentiles) was the preservation of the knowledge of God, by all this body of laws and regulations, until Christ should be born, and should send the Holy Spirit upon all the nations of the earth, and reveal to man many things concerning Himself which it was not His pleasure to make known until then.

These laws also, which were now given to the Jews by Moses from God, were not intended to alter the old covenant made first of all with Adam, and afterwards specially confirmed by God to Abraham. God had from the first in His mercy made what is called a covenant of faith with man, by which He promised salvation, as a free gift, to all who believed in His promises, repented of their sins, and sincerely loved and served Him. This old covenant was the same, in its real nature, as that Christian covenant by which God still accepts the faith

and penitence of us who are Christians; and it was for the sake of the merits of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, that this covenant was originally made by God with Adam, and afterwards confirmed to Abraham and all his posterity for ever.

To the observance of these laws God attached a promise of perfect temporal freedom and prosperity for the children of Israel. Under the Christian covenant, since our Saviour Jesus Christ has died upon the cross, temporal prosperity is not to be considered a mark of Divine favour, as it was with the Jews. As we have greater spiritual gifts to help us, so God expects from us that we should conquer all our natural love for earthly enjoyments much more completely than the Jews could do; and the greatest glory of a Christian is to follow Christ as nearly as possible in the sufferings He endured for us. But with the Jews it was not so. Worldly happiness, riches, and liberty were to be their reward, so long as they remained faithful and abstained from the idolatries of the heathen; but immediate punishment was to follow whensoever they broke through the laws that God had given them. Accordingly, the whole history of the Israelites is an account of their repeated transgressions and chastisements; for the obstinacy and unbelief of this chosen nation were as remarkable as the extraordinary favours which it pleased God to bestow upon them.

CHAP. VI. The Ten Commandments.

WHEN the time was thus come for the giving of the law, which was afterwards called the law of Moses, Moses went up to God in Mount Sinai, where God spoke to him, and communicated to him all he was to say to the people of Israel. And God desired him to tell the people to wash and purify themselves for two days, and on the third day to come near to the foot of the mountain, but not to attempt to ascend it, or even to touch its base, under peril of being stoned, or shot to death with arrows. And when the third day was

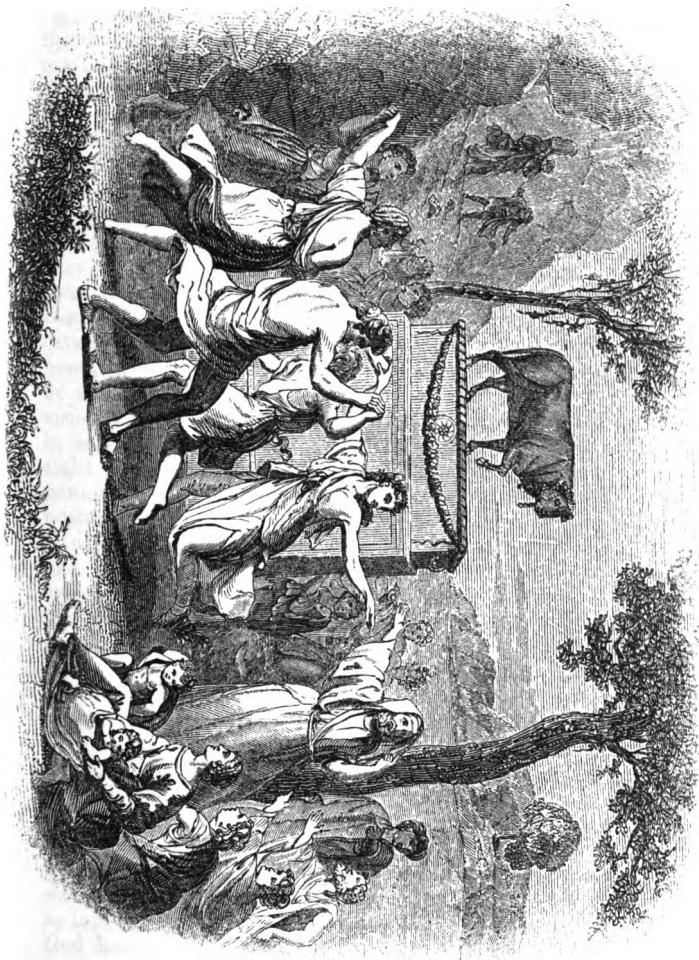
come, behold, thunders began to be heard, and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the mount, and the noise of the trumpet sounded exceeding loud : and the people that was in the camp feared. And when Moses had brought them forth to meet God from the place of the camp, they stood at the bottom of the mount. And all Mount Sinai was on a smoke : because the Lord was come down upon it in fire, and the smoke arose from it as out of a furnace : and all the mount was terrible. And the sound of the trumpet grew by degrees louder and louder, and was drawn out to a greater length : Moses spoke, and God answered him. And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, in the very top of the mount ; and he called Moses unto the top thereof. And when he was gone up thither, He said unto him : Go down, and charge the people ; lest they should have a mind to pass the limits to see the Lord, and a very great multitude of them should perish : the priests also that come to the Lord, let them be sanctified, lest He strike them. And Moses said to the Lord : The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai : for Thou didst charge, and command, saying : Set limits about the mount, and sanctify it. And the Lord said to him : Go, get thee down : and thou shalt come up, thou and Aaron with thee : but let not the priests and the people pass the limits, nor come up to the Lord, lest He kill them. And Moses went down to the people and told them all. And the Lord spoke all these words : I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them : I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me : and shewing mercy unto thousands to them that love Me and keep My commandments. Thou shalt not take the

name of the Lord thy God in vain : for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day. Six days shalt thou labour, and shalt do all thy works. But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God : thou shalt do no work on it, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day : therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayst be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house : neither shalt thou desire his wife, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his. And all the people saw the voices, and the flames, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mount smoking : and being terrified and struck with fear, they stood afar off, saying to Moses : Speak thou to us, and we will hear : let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die. And Moses said to the people : Fear not ; for God is come to prove you, and that the dread of Him might be in you, and you should not sin. These were the ten commandments, which were the foundation of all the rest of the laws which God gave to the Israelites, and they were afterwards written upon two tables of stone by the Almighty Himself, and given by Him to Moses.

CHAP. VII. The Golden Calf.

THE awful display of the Divine glory and majesty with which the giving of the ten commandments had been accompanied so terrified the Israelites, that they prayed that God might no more speak to them Himself, but

THE ISRAELITES DANCING ROUND THE GOLDEN CALF.



would communicate His commands to Moses, who would then deliver them to the people. From that time forth, therefore, Moses alone was permitted to enjoy this great privilege, which the sensual hearts of the Israelites made them dread rather than desire. It pleased God, however, to make one exception in favour of Aaron, Nadab, and Abiu (who were of the tribe of Levi), and of seventy of the elders of the people. These men went up into Mount Sinai with Moses, and there Almighty God vouchsafed to them a wonderful manifestation of His majesty. It is said in the words of Holy Scripture, that they saw the God of Israel, and under his feet, as it were, a work of sapphire stone, and as the heaven when clear. In what way the Almighty thus displayed His divinity to this chosen few it is impossible to comprehend, or whether He shewed Himself in a human form or no. But we may suppose that it was a far different vision of God from that which is granted to the blessed in heaven, where they see God face to face, for such a sight would have destroyed both Moses and his companions; and at the same time that it was something beyond the power of human tongue to describe.

Before going up with Aaron and the others, Moses had written the various commands he had already received from God in a roll, or book, called the book of the covenant, and he sprinkled both the book and the people with the blood of the animals which he sacrificed, as a figure of the blood of Jesus Christ, which was to be the seal of the new covenant between God and man. Then he went up alone into the thick darkness which concealed the top of the mountain, and remained there forty days and forty nights, receiving from God all the instructions which it pleased Him to give for the government of the people of Israel.

These forty days had not expired when the mad sinfulness of the Israelites broke out afresh more abominably than at any time before. Seeing that Moses was so long in returning to them, they began to think that God had deserted them, and that Moses would never come back to protect and guide them; and in their

foolish hearts they began to wish for idol-gods, like the gods of the Egyptians, to be their guardians ; and they applied to Aaron to make them a golden image that they might worship. Aaron, in his sinful cowardice, afraid to set himself against the popular clamour, gave way to their importunities, and bade them bring the golden earrings of the women, and these he melted down, and made of them a calf. And the people rejoiced when they saw the image, so bent were they on going not by faith but by sight ; and Aaron appointed a day for a solemn festival of this idolatrous worship. And the people feasted, and danced before their new god, and made merry, after the true manner of idol-worshippers.

And while this wickedness was going on amongst the people below, God spoke to Moses in the mount, and said : Go, get thee down : thy people, which thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt, hath sinned. They have quickly strayed from the way which thou didst shew them : and they have made to themselves a molten calf, and have adored it, and sacrificing victims to it, have said : These are thy gods, O Israel, that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt. And again the Lord said to Moses : I see that this people is stiff-necked : let Me alone, that My wrath may be kindled against them, that I may destroy them ; and I will make of thee a great nation. But Moses besought the Lord his God, saying : Why, O Lord, is Thy indignation enkindled against Thy people, whom Thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand ? Let not the Egyptians say, I beseech thee : He craftily brought them out, that He might kill them in the mountains, and destroy them from the earth : let Thy anger cease, and be appeased upon the wickedness of Thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou sworest by Thy own self, saying : I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven : and this whole land that I have spoken of, I will give to your seed, and you shall possess it for ever. And the Lord was appeased from doing the evil which He had spoken against His people. And Moses returned

from the mount, carrying the two tables of the testimony in his hand, written on both sides, and made by the work of God: the writing also of God was graven in the tables.

And when he came nigh to the camp, he saw the calf, and the dances: and being very angry, he threw the tables out of his hand, and broke them at the foot of the mount: and laying hold of the calf which they had made, he burnt it, and beat it to powder, which he strowed into water, and gave thereof to the children of Israel to drink. And he said to Aaron: What has this people done to thee, that thou shouldest bring upon them a most heinous sin? Then standing at the entrance of the tents in which the people were dwelling, Moses cried aloud: If any man be on the Lord's side, let him join with me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him: and he said to them: Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Put every man his sword upon his thigh: go, and return from gate to gate through the midst of the camp, and let every man kill his brother, and friend, and neighbour. And the sons of Levi did according to the words of Moses, and there were slain that day about three and twenty thousand men. And Moses said: You have consecrated your hands this day to the Lord, every man in his son and in his brother, that a blessing may be given to you.

CHAP. VIII. God proclaims His Name to Moses.

AGAIN God spoke to Moses, and communicated to him His pleasure respecting the Israelites, and granted him a still more perfect manifestation of His divine perfections than He had as yet given him. And Moses said to the Lord: Thou commandest me to lead forth this people: and Thou dost not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me, especially whereas Thou hast said: I know thee by name, and thou hast found favour in My sight. If therefore I have found favour in Thy sight, shew me Thy face, that I may know Thee, and may find grace before Thy eyes: look upon Thy people,

this nation. And the Lord said: My face shall go before thee, and I will give thee rest. And Moses said: If Thou Thyself dost not go before, bring us not out of this place. For how shall we be able to know, I and Thy people, that we have found grace in Thy sight, unless Thou walk with us, that we may be glorified by all people that dwell upon the earth? And the Lord said to Moses: This word also, which Thou hast spoken, will I do: for thou hast found grace before Me, and thee I have known by name. And he said: Shew me Thy glory. He answered: I will shew thee all good, and I will proclaim in the name of the Lord before thee: and I will have mercy on whom I will, and I will be merciful to whom it shall please Me. And again He said: Thou canst not see My face: for man shall not see Me, and live. And again He said: Behold, there is a place with Me, and thou shalt stand upon the rock. And when My glory shall pass, I will set thee in a hole of the rock, and protect thee with My right hand, till I pass: and I will take away My hand, and thou shalt see My back parts: but My face thou canst not see.

And after this He said: Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the former: and I will write upon them the words which were in the tables, which thou brokest. Be ready in the morning, that thou mayest forthwith go up into mount Sinai; and thou shalt stand with Me upon the top of the mount. Let no man go up with thee; and let not any man be seen throughout all the mount: neither let the oxen nor the sheep feed over against it. Then he cut out two tables of stone, such as had been before: and rising very early, he went up into the mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, carrying with him the tables. And when the Lord was come down in a cloud, Moses stood with Him, calling upon the name of the Lord. And when He passed before him, he said: O the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, patient, and of much compassion, and true: who keepest mercy unto thousands: who takest away iniquity, and wickedness, and sin, and no man of himself is innocent before Thee. Who renderest the iniquity of



the fathers to the children, and to the grandchildren unto the third and fourth generation. And Moses, making haste, bowed down prostrate unto the earth, and adoring, said: If I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, I beseech Thee that Thou wilt go with us (for it is a stiff-necked people) and take away our iniquities and sin, and possess us. The Lord answered: I will make a covenant in the sight of all: I will do signs such as were never seen upon the earth, nor in any nations: that this people, in the midst of whom thou art, may see the terrible work of the Lord which I will do. Observe all things which this day I command thee: I Myself will drive out before thy face the Amorrite, and the Chanaanite, and the Hethite, and the Pherezite, and the Hevite, and the Jebusite. Beware thou never join in friendship with the inhabitants of that land, which may be thy ruin: but destroy their altars, break their statues, and cut down their groves: adore not any strange god. The Lord his name is Jealous; He is a jealous God.

And at the end of another forty days and forty nights, Moses came down again to the people. And as a token of the glory of that Divine Presence in which He had been dwelling, His face shone with so dazzling a light, that the Israelites could not bear to look upon it. He therefore put a veil upon his head, and covered his face, before he gave to them the various commands which the Lord had sent to them by him.

CHAP. IX. The Tabernacle.

MOSES commenced his injunctions to the people by enjoining that peculiar observance of the Sabbath-day to which God bound the Israelites, as a special mark of the covenant He had made with them. They were forbidden to do any work that was not absolutely necessary on that day, even to the lighting a fire for the purposes of cookery; and death was to be the punishment for disobedience to this command.

He then gave directions for the erection of a mov-

able building, to serve for a species of temple, until the Israelites should be settled in the promised land. It was called a Tabernacle, or place in which God Himself would dwell, for within its enclosure God frequently manifested His presence in an especial way, and gave commands for the guidance of His people. And this tabernacle was always taken to pieces whenever the Israelites moved from one spot to another, during their wanderings in the desert, and set up again wherever they rested.

It was in shape and size much like the chancels of many of the old English parish-churches, being about forty-five feet long, fifteen wide, and fifteen high. The back and ends were formed of planks, made of a valuable wood, fastened together with silver and gold fastenings. The roof was covered with a double row of dried skins, and the inside hung with rich tapestry. The building was divided into two parts—the inner one, which was about fifteen feet square, being parted off from the rest by four columns, overlaid with silver and gold, from which hung a veil of the costliest workmanship and most gorgeous colours. The space thus enclosed was called the Holy of Holies, and the outer space was called the Sanctuary.

Into the holy of holies none but the High Priest ever entered; and in it was placed a precious chest, or ark, called the Ark of the Covenant, because it especially represented the throne of God, on which He sat as the merciful Guardian of His people. It was about three feet in length, and half that size in width and height, and plated within and without with gold. Its cover or lid was of solid gold, and was termed the Propitiation, or Mercy-Seat. Upon it stood two figures, called Cherubim, with extended wings, spreading and meeting over the mercy-seat, and emblematic of the veneration with which Almighty God is served and surrounded by the angelic host of heaven. What was the exact form of these figures is not known. They are sometimes supposed to have been of the human form, as angels are generally represented; and sometimes to

have been more purely symbolical representations, like those mysterious figures which appeared to the prophets in later days, and to have shadowed forth the noblest qualities in man and in the beasts of the field. Within the ark were deposited the two tables of stone, on which the ten commandments were written.

In the sanctuary, or outer portion of the tabernacle, was a table overlaid with gold, on which twelve loaves of bread were placed, as an offering to God: whence the table was called the Table of Shew-bread. These loaves were renewed every week, and placed in two heaps of six each, on the top of which incense was kept burning. The bread that was taken away from time to time was eaten by the priests within the sanctuary; and none but they were allowed to eat it. The bread itself was an offering emblematical of the gratitude with which men are to acknowledge that all earthly as well as heavenly gifts come from God.

Besides the table, the sanctuary contained a golden candlestick, with seven branches and seven lamps, which were lighted every day by the high-priest, and left burning through the night; and also a wooden altar, plated with gold, on which incense, the emblem of prayer, was burnt every morning and evening.

Round the tabernacle was a large space or court, about 150 feet long, and seventy wide, and enclosed with pillars and hangings. Within this court stood the altar of holocaust, or whole-burnt sacrifice, in the open air, on which the animals were offered to God, and consumed by fire. There was also a brazen laver, or large vessel for washing, for the use of the priests at the time of sacrifice.

For the purpose of offering these sacrifices, and ministering before God continually, Aaron and his family, to all generations, until the coming of Jesus Christ, were set apart, and consecrated with a solemn anointing with oil, Aaron himself being the high-priest so long as he lived. The entire tribe of Levi was also distinguished from the rest of the people, and appointed to serve in sacred things of an inferior character. The

priests wore vestments of a peculiar form, according to their degree. They all wore a mitre, or head-dress, a white linen tunic, and a variegated girdle. The high-priest wore also a blue robe, reaching down to the ankles, the bottom of it being hung with little golden bells and pomegranates. Outside this robe was the ephod, of rich stuff, embroidered with gold; it was without sleeves, and reached half-way down the body; and on the onyx stones which clasped it together over the shoulders were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites. On the breast of the ephod was a square plate, or pectoral, of embroidery, set with twelve precious stones, on which the names of the tribes were engraved. The words *Urim* and *Thummim* were also engraved on it, as it is supposed; unless it is that these words, meaning Light and Truth, were the name given to the breastplate itself, indicative of those revelations of His will which God from time to time gave to the Jews by means of these twelve stones. On the mitre, which was a kind of turban of twisted silk, was fixed a plate of gold across the forehead, with the words, "Sacred to the Lord."

All these things, with the tabernacle, were made from the offerings given by the people, and were designed and finished under a special direction from God Himself. When completed, they were consecrated with a solemn anointing; and, on the first day that sacrifice was offered, fire came down from heaven, and consumed the victims upon the altar, as a token of the presence of God, and of His acceptance of the sacrifice.

CHAP. X. Nadab and Abiu. The Twelve Spies.

THUS the tabernacle was set up, and public religious services commenced in the beginning of the second year after the departure from Egypt. A fixed code of laws was also given by God through Moses, regulating all the life of the Jews, and designed to keep them separate from the heathen nations, to preserve among them the

worship of the one true God, and to keep them constantly looking forward to the coming of the promised Saviour. Almost their whole history is, however, a series of acts of disobedience to their gracious God, and of neglects of the commands He thus gave them in the most important particulars.

Shortly after the daily sacrifice began to be offered up on the newly-made altar, the family of Aaron itself called down the wrath of God upon its head. It had been ordered by God, that the fire used in the burning of incense should be taken from the altar of incense, which was always kept burning. On one occasion two of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abiu, thinking, no doubt, that the command was of a very trifling importance, lighted their censers, in which they were going to offer incense to the Lord, with common fire, and not from the altar. But as they stood offering the forbidden thing, fire from heaven struck them dead upon the spot. And Moses commanded their bodies, clothed as they were in their priestly vestments, to be cast out of the camp dishonoured, and forbade their kindred to mourn for them.

Other punishments shewed the rigour with which God was determined to visit those who broke his laws. Two of the people quarrelling, one of them blasphemed the name of God; and when the report of his sin was brought to Moses, God commanded the blasphemer to be stoned to death.

Again, Aaron and his sister Mary, or Miriam, on one occasion attempted to set up their authority in opposition to that of Moses, and found fault with him for having married a wife not of the number of the Israelites; and immediately Mary was struck with the leprosy, a loathsome disease, and only healed after seven days, by the intercession of Moses in her behalf.

As soon as they had reached the neighbourhood of Chanaan, twelve men were chosen from the twelve tribes to go and visit the country, and ascertain its condition, and bring back a report to their fellow-countrymen. They went accordingly, and returned with bunches of grapes, pomegranates, and figs of the most beautiful

kind; declaring that the fertility and richness of Chanaan were wonderful; and that, in truth, it flowed, as it were, with milk and honey. All of them but two, Josue and Caleb, at the same time strove to frighten the people with such accounts of the strength and ferocity of the inhabitants of this delightful country, as should deter them from attempting to conquer it, notwithstanding all the promises of support which God had given them. These fatal reports ran throughout the whole camp of the Israelites; and, in the morning, they resolved to cast off the rule of Moses and Aaron, to choose another leader, and to return at once to Egypt. In vain Moses and Aaron, with Josue and Caleb, remonstrated on this disobedience and unbelief; the murmurs and obstinacy of the people waxed worse and worse; and the glory of the Lord appeared over the tabernacle, as a sign that He was about to take vengeance upon the sinful race who thus spurned His favours. At the intercession of Moses, however, God spared the lives of the body of the people; though the ten spies, who were the authors of the sedition, were struck dead. At the same time the Lord declared that of the whole multitude who had come forth from Egypt, only Josue and Caleb should live to enter the promised land.

Still the people were not humbled. The next day they demanded of Moses to lead them at once against the Chanaanites; and when he forbade it, because they would be going against the will of God, they marched without him, and were smitten with a terrible slaughter by their enemies.

CHAP. XI. The Rebellion of Core.

It was not long before a rebellion of another kind broke out among the Israelites. Two hundred and fifty influential men, at the head of whom were Core, Dathan, and Abiron,—the first of whom was a Levite, and the others of the tribe of Ruben,—stirred up the people to revolt against the authority of Moses and Aaron. They

declared also, that Aaron had no right to claim for himself the priesthood; for that all the congregation were holy; and that Moses and Aaron were usurpers of powers which God had not really given them.

Moses instantly appealed to Almighty God as judge between him and the rebels; and he bade Core and his band assemble the next day before the Lord, and come with censers in their hands, and burn incense, and see whether God would accept their offering. Those among the rebels who were of the tribe of Levi he most severely rebuked for their daring presumption, asking them whether it was not enough for them to be separated from the rest of the people to minister in sacred things, without seeking the priesthood also.

When the hour for the judgment was come, Moses divided the rebels from the rest of the congregation, and bade them stand apart with their censers, Aaron standing apart by himself with his censer. The whole multitude of the people were also drawn up before the tabernacle, to behold what would happen. And when all was completed, a glorious light shone from heaven, a token of the immediate presence of God; and a voice came forth and said to Moses and Aaron: Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may presently destroy them. They fell flat on their face, and said: O most mighty, the God of the spirits of all flesh, for one man's sin shall Thy wrath rage against all? And the Lord said to Moses: Command the whole people to separate themselves from the tents of Core and Dathan and Abiron. And Moses arose, and went to Dathan and Abiron: and the ancients of Israel following him, he said to the multitude: Depart from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be involved in their sins. And when they were departed from their tents round about, Dathan and Abiron coming out stood in the entry of their pavilions with their wives and children, and all the people. And Moses said: By this you shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all things that you see, and that I have not forged them of my own head: if these men die the

common death of men, and if they be visited with a plague wherewith others also are wont to be visited, the Lord did not send me : but if the Lord do a new thing, and the earth opening her mouth swallow them down, and all things that belong to them, and they go down alive into hell, you shall know that they have blasphemed the Lord. And immediately as he had made an end of speaking, the earth broke asunder under their feet : and opening her mouth, devoured them with their tents and all their substance. And they went down alive into hell, the ground closing upon them, and they perished from among the people. But all Israel, that was standing round about, fled at the cry of them that were perishing, saying : Lest perhaps the earth swallow us up also. And a fire coming out from the Lord, destroyed the two hundred and fifty men that offered the incense. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying : Command Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest to take up the censers that lie in the burning, and to scatter the fire of one side and the other : because they are sanctified in the deaths of the sinners : and let him beat them into plates, and fasten them to the altar, because incense hath been offered in them to the Lord, and they are sanctified, that the children of Israel may see them for a sign and a memorial.

The following day a tumult arose among the infuriated people, and they charged Moses and Aaron with murdering the people of the Lord. And Moses and Aaron fled to the tabernacle of the covenant. And when they were gone into it, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. And the Lord said to Moses : Get you out from the midst of this multitude ; this moment will I destroy them. And as they were lying on the ground, Moses said to Aaron : Take the censer, and putting fire in it from the altar, put incense upon it, and go quickly to the people to pray for them : for already wrath is gone out from the Lord, and the plague rageth. When Aaron had done this, and had run to the midst of the multitude, which the burning fire was now destroying, he offered the incense : and standing be-

tween the dead and the living, he prayed for the people ; and the plague ceased. And the number of them that were slain was fourteen thousand and seven hundred men, besides them that had perished in the sedition of Core.

After this awful vengeance which God thus took upon those who rebelled against His authority, He gave a fresh and merciful proof that the priesthood was given to Aaron by His especial command. He said to Moses : Speak to the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod by their kindreds, of all the princes of the tribes, twelve rods, and write the name of every man upon his rod. And the name of Aaron shall be for the tribe of Levi ; and one rod shall contain all their families : and thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the covenant before the testimony, where I will speak to thee. Whomsoever of these I shall choose, his rod shall blossom : and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, wherewith they murmur against you. And Moses spoke to the children of Israel : and all the princes gave him rods one for every tribe : and there were twelve rods besides the rod of Aaron. And when Moses had laid them up before the Lord in the tabernacle of the testimony : he returned on the following day, and found that the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded : and that the buds swelling it had bloomed blossoms, which spreading the leaves, were formed into almonds. Moses therefore brought out all the rods from before the Lord to all the children of Israel : and they saw and every one received their rods. And the Lord said to Moses : Carry back the rod of Aaron into the tabernacle of the testimony, that it may be kept there for a token of the rebellious children of Israel, and that their complaints may cease from Me lest they die. And Moses did as the Lord had commanded.

CHAP. XII. Water brought from the Rock. The Brazen Serpent.

AGAIN the people murmured for want of water, so soon as any difficulty was found in obtaining it. They came

to Moses and Aaron, and said: Would God we had perished among our brethren before the Lord. Why have you brought out the church of the Lord into the wilderness, that both we and our cattle should die? Why have you made us come up out of Egypt, and have brought us into this wretched place, which cannot be sowed, nor bringeth forth figs, nor vines, nor pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink? And Moses and Aaron, leaving the multitude, went into the tabernacle of the covenant, and fell flat upon the ground, and cried to the Lord, and said: O Lord God, hear the cry of this people, and open to them Thy treasure, a fountain of living water, that being satisfied, they may cease to murmur. And the glory of the Lord appeared over them. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Take the rod, and assemble the people together, thou and Aaron thy brother: and speak to the rock before them, and it shall yield waters. And when thou hast brought forth water out of the rock, all the multitude and their cattle shall drink. Moses therefore took the rod which was before the Lord, as He had commanded him. And having gathered together the multitude before the rock, he said to them: Hear, ye rebellious and incredulous: Can we bring you forth water out of this rock? And when Moses had lifted up his hand, and struck the rock twice with the rod, there came forth water in great abundance, so that the people and their cattle drank.

It was on this occasion also that Moses and Aaron themselves forfeited their title to lead the people into the promised land. When the tumult first arose, they fell into a state of unbelief; and so far doubted the power and goodness of God to protect His people as to dishonour Him before the people. As their punishment, therefore, God declared that they should die with the rest of the unbelieving multitude, before their children should enter Chanaan.

Aaron himself died not long afterwards; and just before he died, his priesthood was transferred, by God's command, to his son Eleazar.

The rock from which Moses brought forth the water by striking it with his rod was a figure of Jesus Christ; and the water represented His precious blood, which flowed forth for the salvation of man. In like manner also, the very next sin of the Israelites was followed by another token of the great deliverance from sin and death hereafter to be wrought by the Messias. After a while, the continual feeding upon the manna grew odious to the people, and they longed for more rich and varied kinds of food. Their sensual murmurings were punished immediately by an attack of fiery serpents, which bit the people in great numbers, and killed them. And when their hearts were struck with sorrow and fear, and they prayed for mercy, Moses was commanded by God to make a serpent of brass, and to set it up on high among the dying crowds; and whosoever looked at this serpent was healed from the fiery serpents' bite. And thus Christ was lifted up on high upon His cross, that every one who looked to Him in faith and penitence might be saved from the death which sin had brought upon him.

CHAP. XIII. Balaam.

THE Israelites were now close upon the country of the Moabites, an idolatrous and powerful people. Two pagan princes, Sehon king of the Amorrites, and Og king of Basan, had already striven to stop the march of the chosen children of God, and had been defeated with great slaughter. And now the Moabitish sovereign, Balac by name, seeing how his neighbours had been overcome by this new and formidable multitude of wanderers, was terrified at their approach, and planned a method for destroying them. He imagined that if he could get the Israelites cursed by a magician or soothsayer, they would fall an easy prey into his hands when he attacked them. It was the belief of the old idolaters, that each nation was under the special protection of some idol-god, and that it was because the god of

the Israelites was a strong and powerful god that they crushed their enemies wheresoever they came.

Amongst the Ammonites, a Chanaanitish race, at this time lived Balaam, one of those magicians or false prophets who pretended to have supernatural powers, and who sometimes were indeed the instruments by which the devil wrought his accursed purposes among men. This Balaam was celebrated through all the country round, and to him, therefore, Balac, the Moabitish king, had recourse, and entreated him to come and curse the Israelites. It pleased the true God Himself, however, on this occasion to communicate His will to Balaam, and He forbade him to go with Balac's messengers. Balac then sent a second time to him, with offers of the most abundant gifts, if he would come and curse the people. Still Balaam durst not go with him; but his covetous disposition being tempted with Balac's splendid offers, he lingered in the hope that God would give him permission to go.

And this permission God gave him, enjoining him at the same time to take care not to follow Balac's wishes, but to say only whatever words God should put into his heart when he came to see the Israelites encamped on the borders of Moab. On his journey he received another proof that he was taking part with the enemies of God in even thus pretending to agree to the proposals of Balac, and a warning was given to beware of fighting against the Lord, which would have opened the eyes of any one less given up to the love of this world's riches. An angel met him as he rode upon his ass, in company with Balac's messengers. And the ass, seeing the angel standing in the way with a drawn sword, turned herself out of the way, and went into the field. And when Balaam beat her, and had a mind to bring her again into the way, the angel stood in a narrow place between two walls, wherewith the vineyards were inclosed. And the ass seeing him, thrust herself close to the wall, and bruised the foot of the rider. But he beat her again: and nevertheless the angel going on to a narrow place, where there was no way to turn aside

either to the right hand or to the left, stood to meet him. And when the ass saw the angel standing, she fell under the feet of the rider; who, being angry, beat her sides more vehemently with a staff. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass; and she said: What have I done to thee? why strikest thou me, lo, now this third time? Balaam answered: Because thou hast deserved it, and hast served me ill: I would I had a sword that I might kill thee. The ass said: Am not I thy beast, on which thou hast been always accustomed to ride until this present day? tell me if I ever did the like thing to thee. But he said: Never. Forthwith the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam; and he saw the angel standing in the way with a drawn sword; and he worshipped him, falling flat on the ground. And the angel said to him: Why beatest thou thy ass these three times? I am come to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse, and contrary to me: and unless the ass had turned out of the way, giving place to me who stood against thee, I had slain thee, and she should have lived. Balaam said: I have sinned, not knowing that thou didst stand against me: and now if it displeases thee that I go, I will return. The angel said: Go with these men, and see thou speak no other thing than what I shall command thee.

Arriving at Balac's palace, Balaam gave directions for preparing a solemn sacrifice upon seven altars. And when the sacrifice was completed, the Lord met him, and bade him bless the people. And he stood upon a high land, in the very place where the idolatrous worship of the Moabitish god Baal was carried on, and he beheld spread out beneath his feet the vast encampment of the Israelites. And he lifted up his voice, and said: Balac king of the Moabites hath brought me from Aram, from the mountains of the east: Come, said he, and curse Jacob: make haste and detest Israel. How shall I curse him, whom God hath not cursed? By what means should I detest him, whom the Lord detesteth not? I shall see him from the tops of the rocks, and shall consider him from the hills. This

people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and know the number of the stock of Israel? Let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like to them. And Balac said to Balaam: What is that thou doest? I sent for thee to curse my enemies: and thou contrariwise blesseth them. He answered him: Can I speak any thing else but what the Lord commandeth? Balac therefore said: Come with me to another place from whence thou mayest see part of Israel, and canst not see them all: curse them from thence.

Still wavering between his knowledge of the true God and his desire to please Balac, Balaam agreed to this vain proposal. A second sacrifice upon seven altars was offered up, and again he spoke under the inspiration of the Almighty. Stand, O Balac, he said, and give ear: hear, thou son of Sephor: God is not as a man, that He should lie, nor as the son of man, that He should be changed. Hath He said then, and will He not do? hath He spoken, and will He not fulfil? I was brought to bless; the blessing I am not able to hinder. There is no idol in Jacob, neither is there an image-god to be seen in Israel. The Lord his God is with him; and the sound of the victory of the king in him. God hath brought him out of Egypt, whose strength is like to the rhinoceros. There is no soothsaying in Jacob, nor divination in Israel. In their times it shall be told to Jacob and to Israel what God hath wrought. Behold, the people shall rise up as a lioness, and shall lift itself up as a lion: it shall not lie down till it devour the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

Again Balac led him to another spot, hoping that there at length he would curse the dreaded Israelites. But seeing that it was in vain to expect that the Eternal God would change to please a sinful man, he now gave himself up at once to the inspiration which was sent him, and prophesied of the prosperity of the people of Israel, and of the Saviour who should be born from among them. And Balac's anger was kindled against him, and they parted with one another upon the spot.

Yet Balaam could not even now withstand the temptation of Balac's promised gifts. With the true spirit of the devil, he taught the Moabitish monarch how to bring destruction upon the Israelites, by ensnaring them into sin and idolatry, that so God might withdraw His protection, and Himself become their destroyer. By his advice, Moabitish women were sent into the camp of the people, and by their allurements they led them astray in great multitudes, and brought down the heavy wrath of God upon their heads. Those who were faithful to God were sent to smite the sinners, and they slew of them four and twenty thousand. Those that remained were led by Moses against the Moabites, whom they defeated, and slew with terrible slaughter, burning their towns and villages, and seizing their cattle and all their property.

CHAP. XIV. The Death of Moses.

THE time was now at hand for the entrance into the promised land. Forty years had nearly expired since the Israelites came forth from Egypt; and of those men who crossed the Red Sea scarcely any remained alive. Their children and their grandchildren were about to take possession of Chanaan in their place. Moses, therefore, prepared for the conquest of the idolatrous Chanaanites, by repeating to the people the various commandments of the law, and solemnly bade them hold fast to their obedience, promising them every possible blessing as a reward for their faithfulness. He also reckoned up the whole numbers of the Israelites, according to their twelve tribes, and made arrangements for the parcelling out the country they were about to conquer among them. The twelve sons of Jacob were Ruben, Simeon, Levi, Juda, Dan, Nephtali, Gad, Aser, Issachar, Zabulon, Joseph, and Benjamin; but the Levites being set apart for sacred offices, the tribe of Joseph was divided into two parts, the descendants of Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasse, and the country allotted accordingly. To the Levites were assigned forty-

eight cities, with their suburbs, in various parts of the whole country, and a tenth part, or tithe, of the possessions of the people were to be devoted to their support.

Josue, the son of Nun, one of the two spies who had alone trusted in the Divine promise of protection, was appointed to take the place of Moses, as commander of the Israelites; and Moses himself, now 120 years old, but still vigorous, and with body and mind alike unimpaired by age, went up, by God's command, to a high mountain, from which he could see the promised land spread out before him. From Mount Nebo he looked towards Chanaan, and beheld the fertile plains beyond the river Jordan, which his people were about to conquer and dwell in. And there he died, alone, in the presence of God and His holy angels; and the Almighty buried him in the mountains, and the place of his sepulchre was never known to the children of Israel. We learn, however, from one of the books of the New Testament, that the body was sought by the devil, probably for the purpose of being set up as an idol to be worshipped by the Israelites, and that his guilty plans were defeated by the archangel Michael.

BOOK III.

THE CONQUEST OF CHANAAN, AND THE JUDGES.

CHAP. I. The Passage of the Jordan, and the taking of Jericho.

FOR thirty days the Israelites mourned for Moses, and then made ready for the conquest of the idolatrous nations, whose country God had given into their hands. It is likely that, among all the various nations of the time throughout the world, none were more guilty in the sight of God than these Chanaanites, and that in commanding the Israelites to take possession of their territory, God at the same time executed vengeance on them for their sins, while He fulfilled His promise to Abraham, that this very country, in which he had dwelt as a childless stranger, should be possessed by his posterity.

The town of Jericho, now separated from the Israelites by the river Jordan, was to be the first point attacked; and Josue sent forward two men to go secretly into the place, and bring back a report of what they found. These men were entertained in Jericho by a woman named Rahab; but tidings reached the ears of the king of the place that they were spies from the Israelites, and he sent to bid Rahab give them up. She, however, touched by the reports she had heard of the wonders God had wrought for His people, and believing in His name, hid the men among a quantity of flax on the roof of her house, and dismissed the king's messengers with an excuse. As soon as they were gone, she went to the two spies, and offered to let them safely down by a rope from the window of her house, outside the town; for her house was close upon the walls, and they would thus escape without passing through the

gates. Before they went, they gave her a pledge that she and all her household should be spared when the place was taken by the conquering Israelites, if she would hang a scarlet cord out of the window, that her house might be known. They then descended by the cord, and fled away in safety.

On their reaching the camp, Josue made ready immediately for an advance upon Jericho, the hand of God pointing the way by a new miracle. The whole multitude were formed into procession, led by the ark of the covenant borne on high by the priests, at a distance of more than half a mile in advance of the main body of the people. And they marched straight upon the banks of Jordan; and the moment the feet of the priests touched the stream, the tide of waters stopped, so that on one side was raised a mighty mountain of waves, as they flowed down and were held back by the hand of God, while on the other the bed of the river became dry, by the waters flowing on to the sea; and all the people passed through on dry ground. And they took twelve stones from the bed of the river, and set them up as a monument of what God had that day done for them. The manna also now ceased to appear, and the people were supported by the natural food of the country they had come into.

Then, by the Divine directions, Josue gave instructions for the attack upon Jericho. He called the priests, and said to them: Take the ark of the covenant: and let seven other priests take the seven trumpets of the jubilee, and march before the ark of the Lord. And he said to the people: Go, and compass the city, armed, marching before the ark of the Lord. And when Josue had ended his words, and the seven priests blew the seven trumpets before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and all the armed men went before, the rest of the common people followed the ark, and the sound of the trumpets was heard on all sides. But Josue had commanded the people, saying: You shall not shout, nor shall your voice be heard, nor any word go out of your mouth; until the day come wherein I shall say to

you: Cry, and shout. So the ark of the Lord went about the city once a day, and returning into the camp, abode there. And Josue rising before day, the priests took the ark of the Lord, the symbol of His presence, and seven of them took trumpets: and they went before the ark of the Lord walking and sounding the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; and the rest of the common people followed the ark; and they blew the trumpets. And they went round about the city the second day once, and returned into the camp. So they did six days. But the seventh day, rising up early, they went about the city, as it was ordered, seven times. And when in the seventh going about the priests sounded with the trumpets, Josue said to all Israel: Shout; for the Lord hath delivered the city to you.

At the same time, he bade the people to set apart whatever gold, silver, brass, or iron they should find in the city, for consecration to the service of God; and he gave orders that Rahab and her household should be guarded from all harm. Then followed the first of those awful chastisements which God inflicted upon the Chanaanites by the hands of the Israelites. When the people shouted, and the trumpets sounded, the walls fell to the ground as by an earthquake; and the Israelites marched in over the ruins, and smote with the sword every living being, both man and beast, within the city, save Rahab and her family. And the city, with all its riches, was destroyed to the very ground; and Josue pronounced a curse upon any person who should attempt to rebuild it, declaring that his eldest child should die the moment he began to build, and his youngest when he set up the gates of the city thus doomed to destruction.

CHAP. II. The taking of Hai. The Gabaonites.

THE next city to be attacked was Hai, a place of small importance, and not calling for an assault from the

whole army of the Israelites. Three thousand men were therefore sent to seize upon it; but the moment they encountered the troops of Hai a panic seized them, and they fled with the loss of thirty-six of their number. On learning the shameful tidings, Josue threw himself upon his face before the Lord, and entreated to know why it was that defeat and destruction seemed to be the appointed lot of the people. And God answered, that the defeat was a punishment for the disobedience of some person among the people who had appropriated some portion of the wealth he had found in Jericho, contrary to God's express command. Lots were then cast among the whole of the people, and the lot fell upon Achan, a man of the tribe of Judah. When questioned by Josue, Achan confessed that, attracted by the beauty and splendour of the spoil of Jericho, he had taken and hidden a rich garment, and some gold and silver, and that they would be found buried in the middle of his tent. Then, by God's injunction, Achan and his family were stoned to death, his possessions were burned, and a heap of stones cast up upon the bones and ashes, as a memorial of his sin and its punishment.

A large body of troops then marched against Hai, with instructions to pretend to fly again before the bands who should meet them. And when this was done, and the soldiers of Hai and its inhabitants pursued in crowds the flying Israelites, leaving the gates of the city open and unguarded, the remainder of the Israelites seized upon the unprotected place, fired its dwellings, and, between the two parties of the Israelites, the men of Hai were routed and slain, and their possessions divided among the conquerors.

The terror of the victorious Israelites now spread rapidly throughout the Chanaanitish nations; and one tribe thought to deceive them into making a friendly league, before they shared the fate of Jericho and Hai. These were the people of Gabaon, a town not three days' march from the spot where the Israelites were encamped. They sent messengers to Josue, clothed in

ragged garments, and with shoes worn as if with a long and toilsome journey, with the remains of dried-up loaves, and torn skins for holding wine. These men presented themselves to the leaders of the Jews, and pretended to have come from a far distant country, not belonging to the territory of Chanaan, and therefore not forming a part of the land which was to be divided among the tribes of Israel. And they begged to be allowed to become friends to the conquerors, whose fame, they said, had reached them in their distant homes. The falsehood deceived Josue and the chiefs of the Jews, and they swore solemnly not to slay the Gabaonites, as they were about to destroy all the people of Chanaan. Three days' journey, however, betrayed the trick, and the Israelitish people loudly called for vengeance on the deceivers; but Josue and their leaders refused to put them to death, for the sake of the oath they had taken, though in error; but condemned the Gabaonites to serve the Israelites in the lowest of offices,—to hew wood for them, and draw water, as their servants. And such was the lot of the Gabaonites and of their posterity so long as the two nations lasted.

CHAP. III. The Sun stands still. The Division of the conquered Countries.

As the fame of the advancing Israelites spread throughout the Chanaanitish nations, the people yet unconquered began forming alliances with one another to resist the invaders. The desertion of the Gabaonites from the cause of their countrymen also aroused their vengeance; and Adonisedec, the king of Jerusalem, with four other chiefs, attacked Gabaon, and laid siege to it. The besieging army was, however, attacked by Josue, and the heathen armies fled in dismay. A miracle also was wrought by Almighty God, to prolong the hour of punishment upon the idolatrous races; and at the intercession of Josue, the day on which the battle was fought was prolonged beyond its natural length, until

the Israelites had revenged themselves upon their enemies. The sun and moon are said, in holy Scripture, to have stood still, although, as we know, it is the earth which moves, and not the sun; and therefore it was really the earth which stood still for a time upon her course. The Bible, however, uses the common language of the time when it was written, just as we now speak of the sun's rising and setting, although we know well that it remains fixed in the heavens, and only appears to rise and set, through the moving of the earth upon which we stand.

Before the end of the slaughter, the five kings, whose armies had been discomfited, were found hidden in a cave; and by Josue's order, the mouth of the cave was blocked up with stones till the pursuit of the flying Chanaanites was over, when they were brought out and put to death.

One after another, in like manner, the native princes of Chanaan were defeated, and their cities and territories seized by the conquerors. For six years the struggle went on; and at the end of that period above thirty different chiefs had been subdued. The conquered country was parcelled out among the various tribes of the Israelites. Eight-and-forty cities, with their suburbs, were assigned by lot to the priests and Levites for their support; and six cities were also appointed to be places of refuge for any man who should kill another by accident. In them he might live secure from vengeance of the slain man's relations, until the death of the high-priest of the time, when he was to be permitted to return in safety to his own home.

CHAP. IV. The Death of Josue.

WHEN the conquest and division of Chanaan were complete, the people settled down under that form of government under which it was the will of God that they should dwell. They were to have no king, but a chief magistrate, or judge, who was to act as the viceroy, or

representative, of Almighty God Himself, who vouchsafed to be called the king of His people. Josue was the first judge of the Israelites in their new condition, and he ruled the people and administered justice with the same perfect faithfulness to God, and uprightness towards man, which he had shewed from his earliest years. The people prospered under his rule; and though many of the idolatrous nations yet remained unsubdued, and dwelt on the borders of their territories, the Israelites on the whole remained obedient, and avoided that idolatry into which they were ever so prone to fall.

At length, being now 110 years old, Josue prepared to leave this life, and gathered together the people, and delivered to them one of those solemn warnings with which from time to time God, by the mouth of His prophets, encouraged the Israelites to be faithful to their calling. He called for all Israel, and for the elders, and for the princes, and for the judges, and for the masters, and said to them: I am old, and far advanced in years: and you see all that the Lord your God hath done to all the nations round about, how He Himself hath fought for you: and now since He hath divided to you by lot all the land, from the east of the Jordan unto the great sea, and many nations yet remain: the Lord your God will destroy them, and take them away from before your face; and you shall possess the land as He hath promised you. Only take courage; and be careful to observe all things that are written in the book of the law of Moses: and turn not aside from them neither to the right hand nor to the left: lest after that you are come in among the Gentiles, who will remain among you, you should swear by the name of their gods, and serve them, and adore them: but cleave ye unto the Lord your God; as you have done until this day. And then the Lord God will take away before your eyes nations that are great and very strong; and no man shall be able to resist you. One of you shall chase a thousand men of the enemies; because the Lord your God Himself will fight for you, as He hath promised. This only take care of with all diligence,

that you love the Lord your God. But if you will embrace the errors of these nations that dwell among you, and make marriages with them, and join friendships : know ye for a certainty that the Lord your God will not destroy them before your face : but they shall be a pit and a snare in your way, and a stumbling-block at your side, and stakes in your eyes, till He take you away and destroy you from off this excellent land, which He hath given you. Behold, this day I am going into the way of all the earth ; and you shall know with all your mind, that of all the words which the Lord promised to perform for you, not one hath failed. Therefore as He hath fulfilled in deed what He promised, and all things prosperous have come : so will He bring upon you all the evils He hath threatened, till He take you away and destroy you from off this excellent land, which He hath given you, when you shall have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which He hath made with you, and shall have served strange gods, and adored them : then shall the indignation of the Lord rise up quickly and speedily against you ; and you shall be taken away from this excellent land, which He hath delivered to you.

And Josue gathered together all the tribes of Israel in Sichem ; and called for the ancients, and the princes, and the judges, and the masters : and they stood in the sight of the Lord : and he spoke thus to the people : Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel : Your fathers dwelt of old on the other side of the river, Thare the father of Abraham, and Nachor : and they served strange gods. And I took your father Abraham from the borders of Mesopotamia, and brought him into the land of Chanaan : and I multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac : and to him again I gave Jacob and Esau. And I gave to Esau mount Seir for his possession : but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I struck Egypt with many signs and wonders. And I brought you and your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea : and the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen, as far

as the Red Sea. And the children of Israel cried to the Lord : and He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them. Your eyes saw all that I did in Egypt : and you dwelt in the wilderness a long time : and I brought you into the land of the Amorrite, who dwelt beyond the Jordan. And when they fought against you, I delivered them into your hands : and you possessed their land, and slew them. And Balac, son of Sephor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel. And he sent and called for Balaam, son of Beor, to curse you : and I would not hear him : but on the contrary I blessed you by him, and I delivered you out of his hand. And you passed over the Jordan, and you came to Jericho. And the men of that city fought against you, the Amorrite, and the Pherezite, and the Chanaanite, and the Hethite, and the Gergesite, and the Hevite, and the Jebusite : and I delivered them into your hands. And I sent before you hornets : and I drove them out from their places, the two kings of the Amorrites, not with thy sword nor with thy bow. And I gave you a land in which you had not laboured, and cities to dwell in which you built not, vineyards and olive-yards which you planted not. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him with a perfect and most sincere heart ; and put away the gods which your fathers served in Mesopotamia and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But if it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, you have your choice : choose this day that which pleaseth you, whom you would rather serve, whether the gods which your fathers served in Mesopotamia, or the gods of the Amorrites, in whose land you dwell : but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord. And the people answered, and said : God forbid we should leave the Lord, and serve strange gods. The Lord our God He brought us and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage ; and did very great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way by which we journeyed, and among all the people through whom we passed. And He cast out all the nations, the Amor-

rite, the inhabitant of the land into which we are come. Therefore we will serve the Lord, for He is our God. And Josue said to the people: You will not be able to serve the Lord, for He is a holy God, and mighty, and jealous, and will not forgive your wickedness and sins. If you leave the Lord, and serve strange gods, He will turn, and will afflict you, and will destroy you after all the good He hath done you. And the people said to Josue: No, it shall not be so as thou sayest; but we will serve the Lord. And Josue said to the people: You are witnesses, that you yourselves have chosen you the Lord to serve Him. And they answered: We are witnesses. Now therefore, said he, put away strange gods from among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord the God of Israel. And the people said to Josue: We will serve the Lord our God, and we will be obedient to His commandments. Josue therefore on that day made a covenant, and set before the people commandments and judgments in Sichem. And he wrote all these things in the volume of the law of the Lord: and he took a great stone, and set it under the oak that was in the sanctuary of the Lord: and he said to all the people: Behold, this stone shall be a testimony unto you, that it hath heard all the words of the Lord, which He hath spoken to you: lest perhaps hereafter you will deny it, and lie to the Lord. And he sent the people away, every one to their own possession.

CHAP. V. The Successors of Josue. Debbora and Barac.

ON the death of Josue, Caleb took his place as judge of the Israelites, and under his guidance the victories of the people over the remaining Chanaanitish nations were continued. Prosperity, however, soon corrupted them, and they fell into idolatry, worshipped Baalim and Ashtaroth, the gods of the heathens, and degraded themselves by every pagan vice. The root of their temptations lay in their disobedience to God's express command, that they should utterly extirpate all the idola-

trous races whose land God had given them. Many of the tribes neglected this injunction, and suffered the conquered people to live among them. The pagan worship thus remaining at their very doors, the carnal minds of the Jews were speedily corrupted, and they took to worshipping the gods of the very nations they had made their slaves.

Then the vengeance of God came down upon them. The neighbouring princes defeated them in war, and subjected them to their power, until touched to the heart by their miseries, they repented, and cried to God for deliverance. From time to time, as they thus mourned for their sins, God raised up some powerful deliverer, who set them free from their tyrants, and ruled them himself under the authority of the one true God alone. Othniel, the nephew of Caleb, Aod, and Samgar, successively thus delivered them; but as soon as Aod was dead, the old wickednesses revived, and they fell under the dominion of Jabin, a Chanaanitish prince, and for twenty years groaned beneath his oppression.

At length, deliverance was granted to their cries. A holy woman, a prophetess, named Debbora, the wife of Lapidoth, at that time dwelt in Mount Ephraim, and administered justice to all who came to her for her counsel. She aroused the terrified Hebrews, and urged upon Barac, a man of the tribe of Nephtali, that he should raise an army of fighting men, and attack the oppressor. Barac obeyed her commands, on the condition that she herself went with him, telling him at the same time that the glory of the victory should not be his, for that God would deliver Sisara, the commander of Jabin's forces, into the hand of a woman. With 10,000 soldiers Barac then met the troops of Sisara, who fled before their assault, Sisara himself escaping from the field of the battle to the tent of a person whom he supposed friendly to his cause, by name Haber, a Cinite.

Haber's wife, Jahel, met him as he came near, and said to him: Come in to me, my lord; come in, fear not. He went into her tent, and being covered by her

with a cloak, said to her: Give me, I beseech thee, a little water, for I am very thirsty. She opened a bottle of milk, and gave him to drink, and covered him. And Sisara said to her: Stand before the door of the tent, and when any shall come and inquire of thee, saying: Is there any man here? thou shalt say: There is none. So Jahel, Haber's wife, took a nail of the tent, taking also a hammer: and going in softly, and with silence, she put the nail upon the temples of his head, and striking it with the hammer, drove it through his brain fast into the ground: and so passing from deep sleep to death, he fainted away and died. And behold, Barac came pursuing after Sisara: and Jahel went out to meet him, and said to him: Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, he saw Sisara lying dead, and the nail fastened in his temples.

Whether Jahel's conduct was warranted by the customs of war of the country, and her feigned friendship with Sisara was only a lawful deception of an enemy, or whether she was really guilty of forbidden treachery, does not appear from the narrative of the death of Sisara as recorded in the Scriptures. But from the mention that is made of her in a song of praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God, with which Debborah and Barac celebrated their victory, it would seem that her conduct was not contrary to the rules of warfare; and that not only was it the will of God that Sisara should die, but that the means employed by Jahel were on the whole acceptable in His sight.

CHAP. VI. Gedeon's Sacrifice and Victory.

AGAIN the Israelites fell into their usual sins, and for seven years God gave them over into the hands of the Madianites, their old and bitter enemies. At length they were humbled, and prayed for mercy; and an angel was sent to Gedeon, an inhabitant of Ephra, of the tribe of Manasses, and said to him, as he was thrashing wheat,

The Lord is with thee, O most valiant of men. And Gedeon said to him : I beseech thee, my lord, if the Lord be with us, why have these evils fallen upon us ? Where are His miracles, which our fathers have told us of, saying : The Lord brought us out of Egypt ? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hand of Madian. And the Lord looked upon him, and said : Go in this thy strength, and thou shalt deliver Israel out of the hand of Madian : know that I have sent thee. He answered and said : I beseech thee, my lord, wherewith shall I deliver Israel ? Behold, my family is the meanest in Manasses, and I am the least in my father's house. And the Lord said to him : I will be with thee : and thou shalt cut off Madian as one man. And he said : If I have found grace before thee, give me a sign that it is thou that speakest to me, and depart not hence, till I return to thee, and bring a sacrifice, and offer it to thee. And he answered : I will wait thy coming. So Gedeon went in, and boiled a kid, and made unleavened loaves of a measure of flour : and putting the flesh in a basket, and the broth of the flesh into a pot, he carried all under the oak, and presented to him. And the angel of the Lord said to him : Take the flesh and the unleavened loaves, and lay them upon that rock, and pour out the broth thereon. And when he had done so, the angel of the Lord put forth the tip of the rod, which he held in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened loaves : and there arose a fire from the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened loaves : and the angel of the Lord vanished out of his sight.

Gedeon's first act in furtherance of the angel's instructions was, to cut down a neighbouring grove and altar dedicated to the idol Baal ; and, filled with the Spirit of God, he prepared to attack the Madianites. Before he went upon the assault, he entreated from God that a fresh sign might be given to him of the Divine protection that would uphold him. He said to the Almighty : If Thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as Thou hast said, I will put this fleece of wool on the floor :

if there be dew in the fleece only, and it be dry on all the ground beside, I shall know that by my hand, as Thou hast said, Thou wilt deliver Israel. And it was so. And rising before day, wringing the fleece, he filled a vessel with the dew. And he said again to God : Let not Thy wrath be kindled against me, if I try once more, seeking a sign in the fleece. I pray that the fleece only may be dry, and all the ground wet with dew. And God did that night as he had requested : and it was dry on the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

With two-and-twenty thousand men he then approached the Madianitish camp. But first he cleared his army of all who would be an encumbrance to its movements, and bidding every one that was fainthearted return home, he found his numbers reduced at once to 10,000 men. Still the number was to be reduced much further, that the glory of the conquest might be God's alone, through the manifest weakness of the conquering band. Three hundred were chosen from the rest, not because of their greater valour, but by a mere accidental mark, namely, the way in which they drank water from a stream ; these men were furnished each with a trumpet, an empty pitcher, and a lighted lamp, which he hid within his pitcher, that the approach of the band might be unobserved by the Madianites. Thus prepared, they marched at night into the hostile camp, and at midnight the trumpets were sounded, and they clapped their pitchers against each other, to increase the tumult and terrify their sleeping foes. Then, breaking their pitchers, they lifted up the lamps, and blew the trumpets, standing still while the hand of the Lord fought for them. A panic seized the camp of the Madianites, and they turned their swords against one another ; and those who escaped from the indiscriminate slaughter fled from out of the country of the Israelites.

Thus the people were once more free. In their joy, they sought to raise Gedeon at once to the dignity and title of their king, so little were they impressed with the truth that God alone was their deliverer, and Gedeon

his humble instrument. Gedeon refused the unlawful honour, but ruled them as a judge until his death.

CHAP. VII. Abimelech and his Brothers. Jephth's Vow.

GEDEON left seventy sons behind him at his death. One of them, Abimelech, a man of ambitious and bloody character, got together a party for himself in Sichem, the native place of his mother, and by their aid murdered all his brothers but one, the youngest, Joatham by name. He then caused himself to be chosen king. Joatham, however, ventured from his hiding-place, and in a parable reproached the assembled multitude for their ingratitude to his father Gedeon (or Jerobaal, as he was surnamed). "The trees," he said, "went to anoint a king over them: and they said to the olive-tree: Reign thou over us. And it answered: Can I leave my fatness, which both gods and men make use of, to come to be promoted among the trees? And the trees said to the fig-tree: Come thou, and reign over us. And it answered them: Can I leave my sweetness, and my delicious fruits, and go to be promoted among the other trees? And the trees said to the vine: Come thou, and reign over us. And it answered them: Can I forsake my wine, that cheereth God and men, and be promoted among the other trees? And all the trees said to the bramble: Come thou, and reign over us. And it answered them: If indeed you mean to make me king, come ye and rest under my shadow: but if you mean it not, let fire come out from the bramble, and devour the cedars of Libanus. Now therefore, if you have done well, and without sin in appointing Abimelech king over you, and have dealt well with Jerobaal, and with his house, and have made a suitable return for the benefits of him, who fought for you, and exposed his life to dangers, to deliver you from the hands of Madian, and you are now risen up against my father's house, and have killed his sons, seventy men upon one stone, and have made Abimelech the son of his hand-

maid king over the inhabitants of Sichem, because he is your brother: if therefore you have dealt well, and without fault with Jerobaal, and his house, rejoice ye this day in Abimelech: and may he rejoice in you. But if unjustly, let fire come out from him, and consume the inhabitants of Sichem, and the town of Mello: and let fire come out from the men of Sichem, and from the town of Mello, and devour Abimelech. And when he had said thus, he fled, and went into Bera; and dwelt there for fear of Abimelech his brother.

After three years had passed, the warnings of Joatham were fulfilled. The tyranny of Abimelech roused the Sichemites to rebel against his authority; and he took a bloody vengeance upon them, burning their town to the ground with all its inhabitants, both men and women. Then marching to inflict a similar chastisement upon the neighbouring town of Thebes, which was also in arms against him, he lost his life by means of a woman, who stood upon the top of the wall, and hurled upon his head a stone that crushed him to the earth.

About fifty years after the death of Abimelech, the Israelites were again grievously oppressed by the Ammonites, into whose hands God had given them, as a punishment for their idolatries and immoralities. A chief of the town of Galaad at length set them free from their tyrants. Jephthe aroused the spirit of his fellow-countrymen, and marched at their head against the Ammonitish army, first making a vow to the Lord, that if He should grant him the victory, he would offer to Him the first living thing that came forth from the door of his house on his return as a conqueror. God gave the victory to Jephthe, and returning in triumph, to his horror, he beheld his only daughter coming forth with music and dancing, to greet him as the deliverer of his people. But the vow was past, and could not be broken; and when the damsel had mourned her fate with her companions for two months, her father fulfilled his promise to Almighty God. How he fulfilled it, Scripture does not say; it merely tells us that he did to her as he had

vowed. By some it has been believed that he actually offered her as a burnt sacrifice upon the altar; by others, that he consecrated her to God, by condemning her to a perpetual virginity; for among the Jews it was desired by all women to become the mother of children, each one hoping that from herself might spring the promised Saviour of the world. With Christians, virginity is accounted more honourable than marriage; for the seed of the woman has already been born.

CHAP. VIII. Samson and his Riddle.

VARIOUS judges followed Jephthé in ruling the Israelites for many years. At length they again fell under the dominion of their heathen neighbours the Philistines, as a chastisement for renewed idolatries. For forty years this bold and cruel race oppressed them, till they groaned beneath the bondage. A deliverer was given to them in the person of Samson, a man of extraordinary personal strength and courage, but of ill-disciplined mind and violent passions. Before he was born, the work he was to do was foretold to his father Manue by an angel, who commanded that the infant should be consecrated to God from his birth, as a Nazarite, or person specially set apart for the honour of Almighty God, and, as a token of his consecration, was never to have his hair cut or shorn.

As soon as Samson was grown up, the Spirit of God came upon him, and he began to resist the tyranny of the Philistines. He wished to marry a woman of their nation, and went to stay with her father and mother at their house. There, walking among the vineyards, he encountered a young lion, and seizing him, tore him in pieces as he would have torn a kid. After a few days he found that bees had swarmed in the carcass, and a honeycomb was already built in its mouth. Taking some of the honey, he then went to his wife, and gave it to her father and mother, not mentioning where he had found it. His marriage-feast was soon after cele-

brated, and thirty of the Philistines were invited. To these men Samson proposed the following riddle, founded on the honey found in the lion's mouth: Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came sweetness; and he promised to give to each of them a shirt and a coat if they would guess the meaning, they agreeing to give him thirty shirts and coats if they failed to discover it. At the end of seven days, when the forfeits were to be paid by the loser, the Philistines, puzzled and unable to solve the riddle, threatened Samson's wife with death if she did not persuade her husband to tell her his secret, and then betray it to them. Samson, ever unable to resist the solicitations of women, foolishly told her, and she immediately told her countrymen. Then, at evening, they came to him, and said: What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? Samson, however, instantly saw that he had been betrayed by his wife, and strengthened by a divine power, he went and slew thirty other of the Philistines, and with their garments paid his debt to the men who had thus deceived him.

CHAP. IX. Samson and the Philistines. His Death.

SAMSON'S wife proved altogether a worthless woman, and left her husband for another man. On this he openly declared himself at war with her countrymen, who upheld her in her faithlessness. He first caught three hundred foxes, and coupling them tail to tail, fastened torches between the tails, and sent them into the standing corn of the Philistines, and slew many of the Philistines themselves with his own hand. His own countrymen, however, were so terrified at the rage he thus roused in the minds of their oppressors, that they threatened to seize him and deliver him into their hands. Samson then binding them with an oath that they would not themselves take his life, gave himself up to be bound with strong cords, and thus was given up to the Philistines. But as they came to lay their hands on him, he



THE DEATH OF SAMSON.

burst the cords as if they had been flax in the fire, and catching up the jaw-bone of an ass that lay near at hand, he fell upon his foes, and slew one thousand men of them. Then, exhausted with fatigue and thirst, and finding no water to drink, he cried to the Lord for help, and behold, water flowed from the jaw of the ass with which he had smitten his enemies, and he drank and was strengthened.

For twenty years Samson afterwards judged the people of Israel; and at last, himself falling into gross sin, was entrapped by the Philistines. They shut him up in the town of Gaza, setting guards at the gates, intending to kill him in the morning as he came out. At midnight he rose, went to the town-gates, lifted them from their hinges, and carried them on his shoulders to a neighbouring hill-top.

After this he formed a connexion with a Philistine woman, by name Dalila, who was bribed by her countrymen to betray their dreaded foe into their power, by drawing from him the secret of his supernatural strength. She said to him, Tell me, I beseech thee, wherein thy greatest strength lieth, and what it is wherewith if thou were bound thou couldst not break loose. And Samson answered her: If I shall be bound with seven cords made of sinews not yet dry, but still moist, I shall be weak like other men. And the princes of the Philistines brought unto her seven cords, such as he spoke of, with which she bound him, men lying privately in wait with her, and in the chamber expecting the event of the thing: and she cried out to him: The Philistines are upon thee, Samson. And he broke the bands, as a man would break a thread of tow, when it smelleth the fire: so it was not known wherein his strength lay. And Dalila said to him: Behold, thou hast mocked me, and hast told me a false thing: but now at least tell me wherewith thou mayst be bound. And he answered her: If I shall be bound with new ropes, that were never in work, I shall be weak, and like other men. Dalila bound him again with these, and cried out: The Philistines are upon thee, Samson; there being an ambush pre-

pared for him in the chamber. But he broke the bands like threads of webs. And Dalila said to him again: How long dost thou deceive me, and tell me lies? Shew me wherewith thou mayst be bound. And Samson answered her: If thou plattest the seven locks of my head with a lace, and tying them round about a nail, fastenest it in the ground, I shall be weak. And when Dalila had done this, she said to him: The Philistines are upon thee, Samson. And awaking out of his sleep, he drew out the nail with the hairs and the lace. And Dalila said to him: How dost thou say thou lovest me, when thy mind is not with me? Thou hast told me lies these three times, and wouldst not tell me wherein thy great strength lieth. And when she pressed him much, and continually hung upon him for many days, giving him no time to rest, his soul fainted away, and was wearied even until death. Then opening the truth of the thing, he said to her: The razor hath never come upon my head: for I am a Nazarite, that is to say, consecrated to God from my mother's womb: if my head be shaven, my strength shall depart from me, and I shall become weak, and shall be like other men. Then seeing that he had discovered to her all his mind, she sent to the princes of the Philistines, saying: Come up this once more; for now he hath opened his heart to me. And they went up, taking with them the money which they had promised. But she made him sleep upon her knees, and lay his head in her bosom. And she called a barber, and shaved his seven locks; and began to drive him away, and thrust him from her: for immediately his strength departed from him. And she said: The Philistines are upon thee, Samson. And awaking from sleep, he said in his mind: I will go out as I did before, and shake myself: not knowing that the Lord was departed from him. Then the Philistines seized upon him, and forthwith pulled out his eyes, and led him bound in chains to Gaza; and shutting him up in prison, made him grind. And now his hair began to grow again. And the princes of the Philistines assembled together, to offer great sacrifices to Dagon their god,

and to make merry, saying: Our god hath delivered our enemy Samson into our hands. And the people also seeing this, praised their god, and said the same: Our god hath delivered our adversary into our hands, him that destroyed our country and killed very many. And rejoicing in their feasts, when they had now taken their good cheer, they commanded that Samson should be called, and should play before them. And being brought out of prison, he played before them, and they made him stand between two pillars. And he said to the lad that guided his steps: Suffer me to touch the pillars which support the whole house, and let me lean upon them, and rest a little. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the princes of the Philistines were there. Moreover, about three thousand persons of both sexes from the roof and the higher part of the house, were beholding Samson's play. But he called upon the Lord, saying: O Lord God, remember me; and restore to me now my former strength, O my God, that I may revenge myself on my enemies; and for the loss of my two eyes I may take one revenge. And laying hold on both the pillars on which the house rested, and holding the one with his right hand, and the other with his left, he said: Let me die with the Philistines. And when he had strongly shook the pillars, the house fell upon all the princes, and the rest of the multitude, that was there: and he killed many more at his death, than he had killed before in his life.

CHAP. X. Ruth and her Mother-in-law.

THE general history of the Israelites under the judges is nothing more than an account of the idolatrous tyrants into whose hands God gave them as a punishment for their sins, and of the exploits of the chosen deliverers who from time to time were raised up to set them free on their repentance. But one story is related which regards the family from which our Lord Jesus Christ Himself was afterwards born, and which shews in a

beautiful way both the customs of the time, and the piety which reigned in the hearts of many of those Israelites who lived too private a life to be mentioned in the history of the nation itself.

During a season of famine, a certain man, named Elimelech, of the town of Bethlehem, with his wife Noemi and two sons, went into the country of the Moabites to seek for food. There the two sons married wives, the one called Orpha, the other Ruth. After ten years' sojourn in Moab, Elimelech died, and his sons also, leaving the three widows to mourn their loss together. The famine in the land of Israel was now past, and Noemi determined to return to her country and kindred. Her daughters-in-law offered to go with her; but when they reached the borders of Israel, she kissed them, and bade them stay with their own relations and marry again. Orpha yielded to her wishes; but Ruth, more tenderly attached to her mother-in-law, resolved to follow her whithersoever she might go. And Noemi said to her, Behold, thy kinswoman is returned to her people, go thou with her. But Ruth answered, Be not against me, to desire that I should leave thee, and depart: for whithersoever thou shalt go, I will go: and where thou shalt dwell, I also will dwell. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. The land that shall receive thee dying, in the same will I die: and there will I be buried. The Lord do so and so to me, and add more also, if aught but death part me and thee. Then Noemi seeing that Ruth was steadfastly determined to go with her, would not be against it, nor persuade her any more to return to her friends: so they went together, and came to Bethlehem. And when they were come into the city, the report was quickly spread among all: and the women said: This is that Noemi. But she said to them: Call me not Noemi (that is, beautiful), but call me Mara (that is, bitter); for the Almighty hath quite filled me with bitterness. I went out full; and the Lord hath brought me back empty. Why then do you call me Noemi, whom the Lord hath humbled, and the Almighty hath afflicted? So Noemi came

with Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law, from the land of her sojournment; and returned into Bethlehem, in the beginning of the barley-harvest.

Elimelech, Noemi's husband, who was dead, had a kinsman, a powerful man, and very rich, whose name was Booz. And Ruth the Moabitess said to her mother-in-law: If thou wilt, I will go into the field, and glean the ears of corn that escape the hands of the reapers, wheresoever I shall find grace with a householder that will be favourable to me. And she answered her: Go, my daughter. She went therefore, and gleaned the ears of corn after the reapers. And it happened that the owner of that field was Booz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech. And behold, he came out of Bethlehem, and said to the reapers: The Lord be with you. And they answered him: The Lord bless thee. And Booz said to the young man that was set over the reapers: Whose maid is this? And he answered him: This is the Moabitess, who came with Noemi, from the land of Moab, and she desired leave to glean the ears of corn that remain, following the steps of the reapers: and she hath been in the field from morning till now, and hath not gone home for one moment. And Booz said to Ruth: Hear me, daughter, do not go to glean in any other field; and do not depart from this place; but keep with my maids, and follow where they reap. For I have charged my young men not to molest thee: and if thou art thirsty, go to the vessels, and drink of the waters whereof the servants drink. She fell on her face, and worshipping upon the ground, said to him: Whence cometh this to me, that I should find grace before thy eyes, and that thou shouldest vouchsafe to take notice of me, a woman of another country? And he answered her: All hath been told me, that thou hast done to thy mother-in-law after the death of thy husband; and how thou hast left thy parents, and the land wherein thou wast born, and art come to a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord render unto thee for thy work; and mayst thou receive a full reward of the Lord the God of Israel, to whom thou art come, and under

whose wings thou art fled. And she said: I have found grace in thy eyes, my lord, who hast comforted me, and hast spoken to the heart of thy handmaid, who am not like to one of thy maids. And Booz said to her: At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. So she sat at the side of the reapers; and she heaped to herself frumenty, and ate and was filled, and took the leavings. And she arose from thence, to glean the ears of corn as before. And Booz commanded his servants, saying: If she would even reap with you, hinder her not: and let fall some of your handfuls of purpose, and leave them, that she may gather them without shame: and let no man rebuke her when she gathereth them. She gleaned therefore in the field till evening: and beating out with a rod, and threshing what she had gleaned, she found about the measure of an ephi of barley, that is, three bushels: which she took up and returned into the city, and shewed it to her mother-in-law: moreover she brought out, and gave her of the remains of her meat, wherewith she had been filled. And her mother-in-law said to her: Where hast thou gleaned to-day, and where hast thou wrought? blessed be he that hath had pity on thee. And she told her with whom she had wrought: and she told the man's name, that he was called Booz. And Noemi answered her: Blessed be he of the Lord: because the same kindness which he shewed to the living, he hath kept also to the dead. And again she said: The man is our kinsman. And Ruth said, He also charged me, that I should keep close to his reapers, till all the corn should be reaped. And her mother-in-law said to her: It is better for thee, my daughter, to go out to reap with his maids, lest in another man's field some one may resist thee. So she kept close to the maids of Booz; and continued to glean with them, till all the barley and the wheat were laid up in the barns.



RUTH AND BOOZ.

CHAP. XI. The Marriage of Ruth.

AFTER Ruth was returned to her mother-in-law, Noemi said to her: My daughter, I will seek rest for thee, and will provide that it may be well with thee. This Booz, with whose maids thou wast joined in the field, is our near kinsman: and behold, this night he winnoweth barley in the threshing-floor. Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put on thy best garments, and go down to the barn-floor: but let not the man see thee, till he shall have done eating and drinking. And when he shall go to sleep, mark the place wherein he sleepeth: and thou shalt go in, and lift up the clothes wherewith he is covered towards his feet, and shalt lay thyself down there: and he will tell thee what thou must do. She answered: Whatsoever thou shalt command, I will do. And she went down to the barn-floor, and did all that her mother-in-law had bid her. And when Booz had eaten, and drunk, and was merry, he went to sleep by the heap of sheaves: and she came softly, and uncovering his feet, laid herself down. And behold, when it was now midnight the man was afraid, and troubled: and he saw a woman lying at his feet: and he said to her: Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thy handmaid: spread thy coverlet over thy servant, for thou art a near kinsman. And he said: Blessed art thou of the Lord, my daughter; and thy latter kindness has surpassed the former: because thou hast not followed young men either poor or rich. Fear not therefore, but whatsoever thou shalt say to me I will do to thee. For all the people that dwell within the gates of my city know that thou art a virtuous woman. Neither do I deny myself to be near of kin; but there is another nearer than I. Rest thou this night: and when morning is come, if he will take thee by the right of kindred, all is well; but if he will not, I will undoubtedly take thee, as the Lord liveth: sleep till the morning. So she slept at his feet till the night was going off. And she arose before men could know one another: and Booz said: Beware lest any man know that thou camest hither. And again he said:

Spread thy mantle wherewith thou art covered, and hold it with both hands. And when she spread it and held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it upon her. And she carried it, and went into the city, and came to her mother-in-law. Who said to her: What hast thou done, daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she said: Behold, he hath given me six measures of barley; for he said: I will not have thee to return empty to thy mother-in-law. And Noemi said: Wait, my daughter, till we see what end the thing will have. For the man will not rest until he have accomplished what he hath said.

Then Booz assembled the chiefs of the town, and summoned Ruth's nearest kinsman, and gave him the choice of marrying Ruth, and of purchasing from Noemi the land which had belonged to her husband. This the kinsman refused to do, lest he should injure his own family; and Booz then, before the assembled people, took Ruth to be his wife. From this marriage sprang Obed, who was the grandfather of King David.

CHAP. XII. The Birth of Samuel. Heli and his Sons.

SOME time after the marriage of Ruth and Booz, there dwelt in Mount Ephraim Elcana, an Israelite, of whose two wives, one, Anna, had no children. Mourning over her lot, she at length went to offer special prayers to God at Silo that He would grant her a son. There she fell upon her knees, praying silently and fervently, and vowing to God that if He would give her a child, he should be consecrated to the service of God from the day of his birth. Her silent prayers, in which she moved her lips, though she uttered no words, were observed by Heli the priest, who thought her drunk with wine, from the strangeness of her manner, and he sharply reprov'd her. Then she told him her true state; and he bade her go in peace, and trust that God would grant her petitions.

After a while God heard her prayers, and gave her a

son, and they called him Samuel, which means, "one asked of God." And when the child was weaned, she took him to the house of God in Silo, and presented him to Heli, as an offering to Almighty God. And there the child grew up, ministering before the Lord, and clad in a white garment, a token at once of his innocence and the sacred work to which he was set apart. From time to time his father and mother visited him, and brought him a little coat, the work of his mother's hands. And God blessed Elcana and his wife, and gave them three more sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew, and pleased both God and men.

Heli the priest himself had two sons, Ophni and Phinees, young men of dissolute lives, who abused their privileges as sons of the priest, and seized for their use the flesh of the animals that were sacrificed before they were duly offered to God. Their father was too weak and foolish to restrain them, and drew down the anger of God upon his own head, as well as upon his sons. As the young men continued their abominable practices, a prophet was sent by God to Heli, to warn him of the terrible punishment with which his neglect of his duty to his sons would be visited; and telling him that in one day they should both of them die, and that his family should come to utter beggary.

Still Heli could not bring himself to do his duty; and the child Samuel was instructed by God in a vision to repeat to the aged priest the awful sentence that the Almighty had pronounced upon him. In those days God had ceased to send open visions to his people, and every fresh revelation of the Divine will was doubly precious to the pious soul. And it came to pass one day when Heli lay in his place, and his eyes were grown dim, that he could not see: before the lamp of God went out, Samuel slept in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. And the Lord called, Samuel. And he answered: Here am I. And he ran to Heli, and said: Here am I; for thou didst call me. He said: I did not call; go back, and sleep. And he went, and slept. And the Lord called Samuel again. And Samuel arose,

and went to Heli, and said: Here am I; for thou callest me. He answered: I did not call thee, my son; return, and sleep. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: neither had the word of the Lord been revealed to him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose up, and went to Heli, and said: Here am I; for thou didst call me. Then Heli understood that the Lord called the child: and he said to Samuel: Go, and sleep: and if He shall call thee any more, thou shalt say: Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. So Samuel went, and slept in his place. And the Lord came, and stood: and He called as He had called the other times, Samuel, Samuel. And Samuel said: Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth: and the Lord said to Samuel: Behold, I do a thing in Israel: and whosoever shall hear it, both his ears shall tingle. In that day, I will raise up against Heli all the things I have spoken concerning his house: I will begin, and I will make an end. For I have foretold unto him, that I will judge his house for ever, for iniquity; because he knew that his sons did wickedly, and did not chastise them. Therefore have I sworn to the house of Heli, that the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated with victims nor offerings for ever. And Samuel slept till morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel feared to tell the vision to Heli. Then Heli called Samuel, and said: Samuel, my son. And he answered: Here am I. And he asked him: What is the word that the Lord hath spoken to thee? I beseech thee, hide it not from me. May God do so and so to thee, and add so and so, if thou hide from me one word of all that were said to thee. So Samuel told him all the words, and did not hide them from him. And he answered: It is the Lord: let Him do what is good in His sight. And Samuel grew; and the Lord was with Him; and not one of his words fell to the ground.

CHAP. XIII. The Death of Heli. The loss and return of the Ark.

IT was not long before the threatened vengeance fell upon Heli and the people who shared his neglect of the will of God. The Philistines, their old foes, attacked them, and routed them in battle. The people, however, instead of attributing their defeat to the anger of God, superstitiously believed that it was because the ark of the covenant had not been carried into the fight that they had fallen before the swords of the Philistines. They went, therefore, to Silo, where the tabernacle was then fixed, and took the ark and carried it into their camp, and again attacked their enemies. But the device profited them nothing; they were routed with terrible slaughter; Heli's sons were slain upon the field of battle; and the ark of God itself fell into the hands of the Philistines. And when the tidings of this terrible chastisement reached the aged priest and judge, who had now ruled Israel for forty years, he fell backwards from his seat upon the ground, broke his neck, and died upon the spot.

The Philistines took the ark, and in triumph placed it in the temple of their idol-god Dagon, by the side of the image which they worshipped, in the town of Azotus. The following morning, when they entered the temple, they found the image of Dagon lying upon the ground before the ark of the true God, with the head and hands broken off, and the stump alone remaining. Terrible plagues also afflicted the inhabitants of Azotus and of Accaron, a place to which the ark was sent by the people of Azotus in their terror. For seven months, however, the idolaters persisted in keeping possession of the sacred treasure. At last, groaning under the chastisements which God sent upon them, they returned the ark to the Israelites, with offerings of gold from every one of the chief cities of Philistia. At Bethsames, the Israelites received the ark with rejoicings; but, forgetting the reverence due to it, they irreverently gazed into it in crowds, and Almighty God, in His

wrath, smote them with sudden death in such numbers, that 50,000 of them perished.

Samuel now assumed the government of his countrymen as their judge, and induced them to put away their idolatrous practices, and for many years under his wise guidance the land had rest, and regained the favour of God.

CHAP. XIV. The people desire a King. The anointing of Saul.

WHEN Samuel grew old, the people began to be weary of the government under which they had so long prospered, and desired him to give them a king, after the pattern of the idolatrous nations around them. They were not content to be under the sovereignty of Almighty God alone, but trusted that a sovereign prince, such as those who ruled their neighbours, would be a better protector than the Lord of hosts and His deputies, the judges who had governed them from the days of Moses until now.

Samuel himself would not listen to their entreaties, and set before them the tyranny and oppression which would be practised upon them by any man holding the absolute power of a monarch, and warned them that if they chose an earthly protector they must lose the guardianship of their Lord in heaven. Still, bent upon being like the heathen, they shut their ears to Samuel's advice, and the prophet laid their demands before the Lord in prayer; and God granted their prayer, not in mercy, but in anger, and gave to Samuel the necessary directions for anointing the man whom He chose to be the new sovereign of his fellow-countrymen.

The chosen monarch was Saul the son of Cis, of the tribe of Benjamin, a man of noble appearance and great personal stature, being a head and shoulders taller than ordinary men. This man was about this time travelling in search of some asses, belonging to his father, which had strayed, and, directed by Divine Providence, he came to Samuel's house. There the prophet took a vial of oil, and poured it on his head, declaring him to be chosen by God to be the king of Israel. He also gave

him a token to shew that he was guided by the Spirit of God in thus making him king, by foretelling him that on his return he should be met at a certain spot by two men, who would announce that the asses he sought were found; and that at Gabaa he should be met by a company of prophets, or persons whose office it was to sing hymns and praises to God, coming towards him with songs and instruments of music. And thus it fell out. Saul met the prophets, and joined their band, to the surprise of all who saw him, so that they exclaimed, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" and he united with them in their songs and praises, and then returned to his father's house.

Then Samuel called together the people to the Lord in Maspha: and he said to the children of Israel: Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel: I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all the kings who afflicted you. But you this day have rejected your God, who alone hath saved you out of all your evils and your tribulations: and you have said: Nay: but set a king over us. Now therefore stand before the Lord by your tribes, and by your families. And Samuel brought to him all the tribes of Israel: and the lot fell on the tribe of Benjamin. And he brought the tribe of Benjamin and the kindreds thereof: and the lot fell upon the kindred of Metri, and it came to Saul the son of Cis. They sought him therefore, and he was not found. And after this they consulted the Lord whether he would come thither. And the Lord answered: Behold, he is hidden at home. And they ran and fetched him thence: and he stood in the midst of the people: and he was higher than any of the people from the shoulders and upward. And Samuel said to all the people: Surely you see him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people. And all the people cried and said: God save the king. And Samuel told the people the law of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord: and Samuel sent away all the people, every one to his own house.

BOOK IV.

THE KINGS.

CHAP. I. Samuel justified by God before the people.

ABOUT a month after the election of Samuel, he was called to lead his subjects against the Ammonites, who invaded the Israelitish territory. He marched against them, defeated them, and the whole country of Israel was filled with rejoicings.

It pleased God, however, to make a fresh and awful manifestation, that, notwithstanding the success that attended the arms of the new monarch, the people had sinned in asking for a king, and that their ingratitude to the aged Samuel, under whose government they had so long prospered, was hateful in His eyes. By the instruction of the Almighty, Samuel called the people together, and said to them, Behold, I have hearkened to your voice in all that you said to me, and have made a king over you. And now the king goeth before you : but I am old and grey-headed : and my sons are with you : having then conversed with you from my youth until this day, behold, here I am. Speak of me before the Lord, and before His anointed, whether I have taken any man's ox or ass : If I have wronged any man, if I have oppressed any man, if I have taken a bribe at any man's hand : and I will despise it this day, and will restore it to you. And they said : Thou hast not wronged us, nor oppressed us, nor taken ought at any man's hand. And he said to them : The Lord is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day, that you have not found any thing in my hand. And they said : He is witness. And Samuel said to the people : It is the Lord who made Moses and Aaron, and brought

our fathers out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore stand up, that I may plead in judgment against you before the Lord, concerning all the kindness of the Lord, which He hath shewn to you, and to your fathers: How Jacob went into Egypt, and your fathers cried to the Lord: and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, and brought your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place: and they forgot the Lord their God: and He delivered them into the hands of Sisara captain of the army of Hasor, and into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab: and they fought against them. But afterwards they cried to the Lord, and said: We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Astaroth: but now deliver us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve Thee. And the Lord sent Jerobaal, and Badan, and Jephthe, and Samuel, and delivered you from the hand of your enemies round about; and you dwelt securely. But seeing that Naas king of the children of Ammon was come against you, you said to me: Nay, but a king shall reign over us: whereas the Lord your God was your king. Now therefore your king is here, whom you have chosen and desired: behold, the Lord hath given you a king. If you will fear the Lord and serve Him, and hearken to His voice, and not provoke the mouth of the Lord; then shall both you, and the king that reigneth over you, be followers of the Lord your God. But if you will not hearken to the voice of the Lord, but will rebel against His words, the hand of the Lord shall be upon you, and upon your fathers. Now then stand, and see this great thing which the Lord will do in your sight. Is it not wheat-harvest to-day? I will call upon the Lord, and He shall send thunder and rain: and you shall know and see that you yourselves have done a great evil in the sight of the Lord, in desiring a king over you. And Samuel cried unto the Lord: and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day. And all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel. And all the people said to Samuel: Pray for thy servants to the Lord thy God, that we may not die,

for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for a king. And Samuel said to the people: Fear not; you have done all this evil: but yet depart not from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. And turn not aside after vain things, which shall never profit you, nor deliver you, because they are vain. And the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake: because the Lord hath sworn to make you His people. And far from me be this sin against the Lord, that I should cease to pray for you, and I will teach you the good and right way. Therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth and with your whole heart; for you have seen the great works which He hath done among you. But if you will still do wickedly, both you and your king shall perish together.

CHAP. II. The rejection of Saul. His Wars with the Philistines and the Amalekites.

SAUL had scarcely reigned two years, when he was called to wage war upon the old enemies of his race, the Philistines. Unhappily for himself, he had scarcely commenced the war when he brought upon his own head the condemnation of God, and the rejection of his family from the throne of Israel. A certain day had been appointed by Samuel for the offering a solemn sacrifice to the Lord, in order to draw down His blessing upon the approaching conflict. For seven days, at the end of which Samuel was to have come to the camp where Saul was with his army, Saul waited for the prophet; but when Samuel did not then appear, a panic began to seize upon the troops, and they deserted their posts in great numbers. Saul, therefore, preferring to take the matter into his own hands rather than delay any more, himself offered the sacrifices, though totally unauthorised by the divine law thus to take upon himself the priestly office. Scarcely had he made an end of offering when Samuel came. He severely condemned the rash haste of Saul, and assured him that as he had

been thus faithless and disobedient in the moment when God was trying his fidelity, the kingdom should be taken from him, and given to one whom the Lord would choose after His own heart. Thus saying, he left the monarch to march against his foes.

During the battle which ensued, Saul was so eager to follow up the victory which God gave him, that he forbade any of the people to taste food until the evening. Jonathan, his own son, however, a youth of noble character and great bravery, and much beloved by the people, not knowing what his father had done, tasted some honey which he found in a wood. The next day his error was discovered; and his father would have put him to death but that the people interfered, and would not suffer the cruel punishment to be inflicted.

Saul's next war was with the people of Amalek, whom a divine command enjoined him utterly to destroy, for their sins against Israel; sparing neither man, woman, nor child, nor the cattle of the field. He attacked the Amalekites therefore, and smote them with a terrible destruction; but captivated with the richness of the spoils, he saved some of the most valuable, and also spared the life of Agag, the Amalekite sovereign.

And Samuel came to him, as he was offering sacrifice to the Lord from these forbidden spoils; and when the prophet came near, Saul greeted him and said: Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have fulfilled the word of the Lord. And Samuel said: What meaneth then this bleating of the flocks, which soundeth in my ears, and the lowing of the herds, which I hear? And Saul said: They have brought them from Amalek: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the herds, that they might be sacrificed to the Lord thy God: but the rest we have slain. And Samuel said to Saul: Suffer me, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said to him: Speak. And Samuel said: When thou wast a little one in thy own eyes, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the Lord anointed thee to be king over Israel: and the Lord sent thee on the way, and said:

Go, and kill the sinners of Amalek : and thou shalt fight against them until thou hast utterly destroyed them. Why then didst thou not hearken to the voice of the Lord ; but hast turned to the prey, and hast done evil in the eyes of the Lord ? And Saul said to Samuel : Yea, I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord, and have walked in the way by which the Lord sent me ; and have brought Agag the king of Amalek : and Amalek I have slain. But the people took of the spoils sheep and oxen, as the first-fruits of those things that were slain, to offer sacrifice to the Lord their God in Galgal. And Samuel said : Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed ? For obedience is better than sacrifices ; and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams. Because it is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel ; and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey. Forasmuch therefore as thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord hath also rejected thee from being king. And Saul said to Samuel : I have sinned, because I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words, fearing the people, and obeying their voice. But now bear, I beseech thee, my sin ; and return with me, that I may adore the Lord. And Samuel said to Saul : I will not return with thee, because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord ; and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And Samuel turned about to go away, but he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said to him : The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day ; and hath given it to thy neighbour who is better than thee.

And Samuel commanded the idolatrous and cruel king of the Amalekites to be brought forth ; and there on the spot he was slain, because of his bloodthirstiness and idolatries. And Samuel came no more to see Saul till the day of his death.

CHAP. III. David anointed to be the future King. He slays Goliath.

THE prophet, who was thus God's instrument in pronouncing His judgments upon Saul, yet mourned a long time for the fate of the disobedient monarch. At length the Lord bade him anoint the chosen one who was to ascend the throne of Saul when Saul should die. He sent him to seek for David, the youngest of the seven sons of Isai, or Jesse, the Bethlehemite. And when the youth came before the prophet, he was ruddy and beautiful to behold, and of a comely face. And Samuel took a horn of oil, and poured it upon David's head in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.

Saul, meanwhile, grew harsh and miserable upon his royal throne. An evil spirit troubled him, and afflicted him with a melancholy approaching to madness. It was found, however, that the strains of sweet music lulled his pains, and refreshed him, so that he could rouse himself to his ordinary occupations. His servants, therefore, sought for some skilful musician to play upon the harp before him; and learning that the young David was an accomplished player, they brought him to the wretched king. And when the evil spirit was upon Saul, David took his harp and played, and Saul was refreshed, for the evil spirit left him.

The Philistines at this time took courage to attack the Israelites again, perhaps hearing of Saul's melancholy state of soul, and thinking he would be easily defeated. They advanced, therefore, and encamped in the Israelites' territory. In their army was a man of gigantic stature, Goliath by name, eight or nine feet high, and of enormous strength. This man came out, and challenged the Hebrew army to find one of their own number to fight him in single combat, with an agreement that whichever of the two should slay his adversary, to his countrymen dominion should be given over the countrymen of the defeated champion. But none dared meet him, and for forty days he defied the armies of Israel and the God of hosts.

At this time David was sent into the camp by his father to carry refreshments to his brothers, who were fighting men, David himself being a shepherd, and hitherto a man of peace. And when he heard the story of Goliath, inspired by the guidance of Almighty God, and notwithstanding the sneers of his brothers against his youth and presumption, his heart was filled with indignation against the blaspheming Philistine. His words so struck the men who heard him, that they carried him to Saul, who, when he saw him, had forgotten him.

And when he was brought to the king, he said: Let not any man's heart be dismayed in him: I thy servant will go, and will fight against the Philistine. And Saul said to David: Thou art not able to withstand this Philistine, nor to fight against him: for thou art but a boy; but he is a warrior from his youth. And David said to Saul: Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, or a bear, and took a ram out of the midst of the flock: and I pursued after them, and struck them, and delivered it out of their mouth: and they rose up against me; and I caught them by the throat; and I strangled, and killed them. For I thy servant have killed both a lion and a bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be also as one of them. I will go now and take away the reproach of the people: for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, who hath dared to curse the army of the living God? And David said: The Lord who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said to David: Go; and the Lord be with thee. And Saul clothed David with his garments, and put a helmet of brass upon his head, and armed him with a coat of mail. And David having girded his sword upon his armour, began to try if he could walk in armour: for he was not accustomed to it. And David said to Saul: I cannot go thus, for I am not used to it. And he laid them off. And he took his staff, which he had always in his hands: and chose him five smooth stones out of

the brook, and put them into the shepherd's scrip, which he had with him : and he took a sling in his hand, and went forth against the Philistine. And the Philistine came on, and drew nigh against David, and his armour-bearer before him. And when the Philistine looked, and beheld David, he despised him : for he was a young man, ruddy, and of a comely countenance. And the Philistine said to David : Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with a staff ? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And he said to David : Come to me, and I will give thy flesh to the birds of the air, and to the beasts of the earth. And David said to the Philistine : Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield : but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which thou hast defied this day : and the Lord will deliver thee into my hand ; and I will slay thee, and take away thy head from thee : and I will give the carcasses of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air, and to the beasts of the earth ; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know, that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear : for it is His battle, and He will deliver you into our hands. And when the Philistine arose, and was coming, and drew nigh to meet David, David made haste, and ran to the fight to meet the Philistine. And he put his hand into his scrip, and took a stone, and cast it with the sling ; and fetching it about, struck the Philistine in the forehead : and he fell on his face upon the earth. And David prevailed over the Philistine, with a sling and a stone : and he struck and slew the Philistine. And as David had no sword in his hand, he ran and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath, and slew him, and cut off his head. And the Philistines seeing that their champion was dead, fled away. And the Israelites pursued them, and smote them with great slaughter. And David took the head of the giant and brought it to Saul, who then asked his name and family.

CHAP. IV. Saul persecutes David.

FROM this time a close friendship sprung up between Jonathan and David, which lasted unchanged till the death of Jonathan. Saul, however, could not endure the sight of the young conqueror; though he knew not yet that he was to be his successor on the throne. He was jealous of the fame he had won by his victory; and when David again played upon the harp to soothe the dark melancholy that oppressed him, he suddenly struck at him with a spear; and but for David's quickness in starting aside, would have murdered him on the spot. Nevertheless, as he had promised his daughter to the conqueror of Goliath, whoever he might be, he gave his daughter Michol to be David's wife. David's prudent conduct, however, exasperated him more and more, while it won the hearts of all the people.

At one time Saul again tried to strike David with a spear, as he played before him. At another, he sent men to kill him in his own house; and he was only saved by being let down from a window by his wife, who gained time for David to escape by putting an image in his bed, and by persuading the men who came to murder him that he lay there sick. The future sovereign thus became an outlaw in the land which he was to rule; and it was only the warnings sent him by Jonathan that enabled him to escape the fury of his persecutor. At one time he and his companions were reduced to such a state of starvation, that he was compelled to beg of Achimelech the priest some of the consecrated loaves, which were offered to God on the table of shew-bread. At another he fell into the hands of the sovereign of Geth, the birth-place of Goliath, whom he had slain; and only saved himself by feigning to be mad. Achimelech's charity to him also brought down the vengeance of Saul upon his head, and the king slew the charitable priest, and all the priests who were with him; one of Achimelech's sons, Abiathar, alone escaping. In the end his hatred grew so wild, that he followed after David with a large body of

men, to hunt him out from his hiding-places among the mountains. There David was living the life of an outcast, though he had gathered together a considerable band of companions, who served under him as their chief. Twice, however, did the oppressor fall unwittingly into the power of his intended victim; and twice did David spare the life of Saul, because he was the anointed of the Lord, only reproaching him for his cruelty and bloody intentions.

CHAP. V. Saul and the Witch of Endor.

THE days of Saul were now drawing to their close. The Philistines once more attacked the Israelites; and Saul, now no longer answered by God when he consulted Him in his difficulties, was terrified, and sought unlawful means for discovering what was to be the result of the coming fight. God answered him neither by dreams, nor by priests, nor by prophets. And Saul said to his servants: Seek me a woman that hath a divining spirit; and I will go to her, and inquire by her. And his servants said to him: There is a woman that hath a divining spirit at Endor. Then he disguised himself, and put on other clothes: and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night; and he said to her: Divine to me by thy divining spirit, and bring me up him whom I shall tell thee. And the woman said to him: Behold, thou knowest all that Saul hath done, how he hath rooted out the magicians and soothsayers from the land: why then dost thou lay a snare for my life, to cause me to be put to death? And Saul swore unto her by the Lord, saying: As the Lord liveth, there shall no evil happen to thee for this thing. And the woman said to him: Whom shall I bring up to thee? And he said: Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice, and said to Saul: Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said to her: Fear not: what hast thou seen? And the woman said to Saul: I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said to her: What form is he of? And she said: An old man cometh

up, and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul understood that it was Samuel : and he bowed himself with his face to the ground, and adored. And Samuel said to Saul : Why hast thou disturbed my rest, that I should be brought up ? And Saul said : I am in great distress : for the Philistines fight against me ; and God is departed from me, and would not hear me, neither by the hand of prophets, nor by dreams : therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest shew me what I shall do. And Samuel said : Why askest thou me, seeing the Lord has departed from thee, and is gone over to thy rival : for the Lord will do to thee as He spoke by me : and He will rend thy kingdom out of thy hand, and will give it to thy neighbour David : because thou didst not obey the voice of the Lord, neither didst thou execute the wrath of His indignation upon Amalek. Therefore hath the Lord done to thee what thou sufferest this day. And the Lord also will deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines : and to-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me : and the Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines. And forthwith Saul fell all along on the ground : for he was frightened with the words of Samuel : and there was no strength in him ; for he had eaten no bread all that day. And the woman came to Saul (for he was very much troubled) and said to him : Behold, thy handmaid hath obeyed thy voice ; and I have put my life in my hand : and I hearkened unto the words which thou spakest to me. Now therefore hear thou also the voice of thy handmaid ; and let me set before thee a morsel of bread, that thou mayest eat and recover strength, and be able to go on thy journey. But he refused and said : I will not eat. But his servants and the woman forced him : and at length hearkening to their voice, he arose from the ground, and sat upon the bed. Now the woman had a fattened calf in the nouse ; and she made haste, and killed it : and taking meal kneaded it, and baked some unleavened bread, and set it before Saul, and before his servants. And when they had eaten they rose up, and walked all that night.

CHAP. VI: The Death of Saul. David made King.

IN the battle that followed, the Israelites fled before their enemies; and Saul was wounded by the archers, and Jonathan and two of his other sons were slain. And seeing that all was lost, he took his sword and threw himself upon it, and died upon the field of battle. Tidings of his death were brought to David, by a man who boasted that with his own hand he had slain the king, hoping for a reward from David. But David had him slain upon the spot, for lifting up his hand against the Lord's anointed. And he mourned for Saul and Jonathan, and said: Consider, O Israel, for them that are dead, wounded on thy high places. The illustrious of Israel are slain upon thy mountains: how are the valiant fallen! Tell it not in Geth; publish it not in the streets of Ascalon: lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice; lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gelboe, let neither dew nor rain come upon you, neither be they fields of first-fruits: for there was cast away the shield of the valiant, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the valiant, the arrow of Jonathan never turned back, and the sword of Saul did not return empty. Saul and Jonathan, lovely and comely in their life, even in death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you with scarlet in delights, who gave ornaments of gold for your attire. How are the valiant fallen in battle! Jonathan slain in the high places! I grieve for thee, my brother Jonathan, exceeding beautiful, and amiable to me above the love of women. As the mother loveth her only son, so did I love thee. How are the valiant fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

When the mourning was past, the people who were of the tribe of Juda lost no time in acknowledging David as their sovereign, and he at once assumed the royal power over them. Isboseth, however, a surviving

son of Saul, claimed the sovereignty over the other tribes, and governed them a while, till two of his own servants murdered him. David then, having put the murderers to death, was acknowledged king by the whole nation, being now thirty years of age. His first act was to conquer the city of Jerusalem, which, until now, had remained in the hands of one of the remaining tribes of Chanaan, and there he fixed his royal residence, and fortified the Mount Sion. And he gave the people rest from their enemies, defeating the Philistines, and entering into a league with Hiram the king of Tyre, from whom he obtained precious materials and workmen for the building of his royal house.

CHAP. VII. David proposes to build a Temple at Jerusalem.
His prayer and thanksgiving.

DAVID'S first care was to provide for the honour of God, who had so wonderfully favoured him, by bringing the ark of the covenant from the temporary place of security where it had been placed after being recovered from the heathen. He intended to have it taken to his own house at Jerusalem, but was deterred from so doing by one of those awful manifestations of the Divine anger against all irreverent dealing with sacred things by which Almighty God at times taught His people to fear His Majesty. The ark was carried upon a car, with instruments of music playing, and a vast procession of the people, when, at a certain place, the oxen which drew it kicked, and Oza, one of the men who drove the oxen, rashly put forth his hand and laid hold of the ark, to prevent it from falling. Doubtless, in his inward heart he was not moved by real reverence to the Lord to do this, but regarded the ark of God as he would have regarded a piece of common household furniture; for in an instant God struck him dead, and he died there before the ark.

David, however, feared that this punishment of Oza was a token of the Divine displeasure; and instead of

taking it to his own home, he had it carried at once to the house of Obbedom the Gethite. But God so blessed the household of Obbedom, that the king, after three months, resolved to carry the ark to his palace at Jerusalem; and with all solemnities it was taken and placed in a tabernacle erected for its reception. On the way David himself danced before the ark with excess of joy; and bread and meat were distributed to all the multitude of the people. One person alone is recorded to have been untouched with the pious fervour. Michol, David's own wife, the daughter of Saul, scorned her husband for his dancing before the ark, like one of the poorest of the people; and for a punishment upon her godless pride, she bore no children until the day of her death.

And now that the land was at rest from its enemies, and David's throne was established in peace, he said to Nathan the prophet: Dost thou see that I dwell in a house of cedar, and the ark of God is lodged within skins? And Nathan said to the king: Go, do all that is in thy heart: because the Lord is with thee. But it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying: Go, and say to My servant David: Thus saith the Lord: Shalt thou build Me a house to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in a house from the day that I brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt even to this day; but have walked in a tabernacle, and in a tent. In all the places that I have gone through with all the children of Israel, did I ever speak a word to any one of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed My people Israel, saying: Why have you not built Me a house of cedar? And now thus shalt thou speak to My servant David: Thus saith the Lord of hosts: I took thee out of the pastures from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel: and I have been with thee wheresoever thou hast walked, and have slain all thy enemies from before thy face: and I have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great ones that are on the earth. And I will appoint a place for My people Israel: and I will plant them, and they

shall dwell therein, and shall be disturbed no more: neither shall the children of iniquity afflict them any more as they did before, from the day that I appointed judges over My people Israel; and I will give thee rest from all thy enemies. And the Lord foretelleth to thee, that the Lord will make thee a house. And when thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels: and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house to My name; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to Me a son: and if he commit any iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. But My mercy I will not take away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before My face. And thy house shall be faithful, and thy kingdom for ever before thy face: and thy throne shall be firm for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak to David. And David went in, and sat before the Lord, and said: Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me thus far? But yet this hath seemed little in Thy sight, O Lord God, unless Thou didst also speak of the house of Thy servant for a long time to come: for this is the law of Adam, O Lord God. And what can David say more unto Thee? for Thou knowest Thy servant, O Lord God: for Thy word's sake, and according to Thy own heart Thou hast done all these great things; so that Thou wouldst make it known to Thy servant. Therefore Thou art magnified, O Lord God, because there is none like to Thee; neither is there any God besides Thee, in all the things that we have heard with our ears. And what nation is there upon earth, as Thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself, and to make Him a name, and to do for them great and terrible things, upon the earth, before the face of Thy people, whom Thou redeemedst to Thyself out of Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For Thou hast confirmed to Thyself Thy people Israel to be

an everlasting people : and Thou, O Lord God, art become their God. And now, O Lord God, raise up for ever the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant, and concerning his house ; and do as Thou hast spoken, that Thy name may be magnified for ever, and it may be said : The Lord of hosts is God over Israel. And the house of Thy servant David shall be established before the Lord, because Thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to the ear of Thy servant, saying : I will build Thee a house : therefore hath Thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer to Thee. And now, O Lord God, Thou art God, and Thy words shall be true ; for Thou hast spoken to Thy servant these good things. And now begin, and bless the house of Thy servant, that it may endure for ever before Thee : because Thou, O Lord God, hath spoken it ; and with Thy blessing let the house of Thy servant be blessed for ever.

CHAP. VIII. David's Adultery and Repentance.

FOR a while prosperity crowned all David's works ; he defeated the Philistines, the Moabites, and all the enemies of his nation ; and his government of the people was distinguished for its justice and happy results. He remembered also his unfortunate predecessor on the throne, and made inquiries if any of Saul's kindred remained alive, that for Jonathan's sake he might shew them kindness. One was found, Miphiboseth, a son of Jonathan, who was lame in both his feet ; and to him David gave all Saul's private possessions, taking him at the same time to live in his own palace, and to eat at his table, as if he were one of the king's sons.

A war soon after broke out with the Ammonites, in consequence of a grievous insult offered to David's ambassadors, whom he sent to congratulate the young king of the country on his accession to the throne. Success soon crowned the arms of Israel, while David himself fell into a fearful sin, which brought down the judgments of God upon his head. In the East it is a

frequent custom to make the roofs of the houses flat, for walking upon ; and David one day, after the noon-day sleep, which is commonly taken in hot countries, walking upon the roof of his palace, saw in a neighbouring house a woman of great beauty, Bethsabee by name, the wife of Urias, one of the officers of his army, who was at this time engaged at the siege of Rabba, a fortified city of the Ammonites. Overpowered by unholy passion, and forgetting alike his duty to God and to man, he sent for the woman to his house ; and when he found that a child was about to be born to her, the fruit of his unlawful intercourse, he planned a still greater wickedness. He first sent for Urias ; and Urias, knowing nothing of the injury the king had done him, received his attentions with all respect, but returned immediately to the camp before Rabba without seeing his wife. David then, entirely possessed by the devil, sent private orders to Joab, the general of his army, and a man of violent and unscrupulous character, to place Urias in such a position in the fight that he might be certainly slain. This Joab did ; and when Urias was killed by the Ammonites, he sent word to tell the guilty monarch. And when the time was passed which custom required for a widow to mourn for her husband, Bethsabee married David, and became his lawful wife.

God then, in mercy to his sinful servant, sent the prophet Nathan to rebuke him for his iniquities. Nathan came to the king, and related to him a parable. There were two men, he said, in one city, the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many sheep and oxen. But the poor man had nothing at all but one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and nourished up ; and which had grown up in his house together with his children, eating of his bread, and drinking of his cup, and sleeping in his bosom : and it was unto him as a daughter. And when a certain stranger was come to the rich man, he spared to take of his own sheep and oxen, to make a feast for that stranger, who was come to him, but took the poor man's ewe, and dressed it for the man that was come

to him. And David's anger being exceedingly kindled against that man, he said to Nathan : As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this is a child of death. He shall restore the ewe four-fold ; because he did this thing, and had no pity. And Nathan said to David : Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel : I anointed thee king over Israel : and I delivered thee from the hand of Saul ; and gave thee thy master's house and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and Juda : and if these things be little, I shall add far greater things unto thee. Why, therefore, hast thou despised the word of the Lord, to do evil in My sight ? Thou hast killed Urias the Hethite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised Me, and hast taken the wife of Urias the Hethite to be thy wife. And David said to Nathan : I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David : The Lord hath also taken away thy sin : thou shalt not die. Nevertheless, because thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme for this thing, the child that is born to thee shall surely die. And Nathan returned to his house. The Lord also struck the child which the wife of Urias had borne to David : and his life was despaired of. And David besought the Lord for the child : and David kept a fast, and going in by himself lay upon the ground. And the ancients of his house came, to make him rise from the ground ; but he would not : neither did he eat meat with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died : and the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead. For they said : Behold, when the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he would not hearken to our voice : how much more will he afflict himself, if we tell him that the child is dead ? But when David saw his servants whispering, he understood that the child was dead ; and he said to his servants : Is the child dead ? They answered him : He is

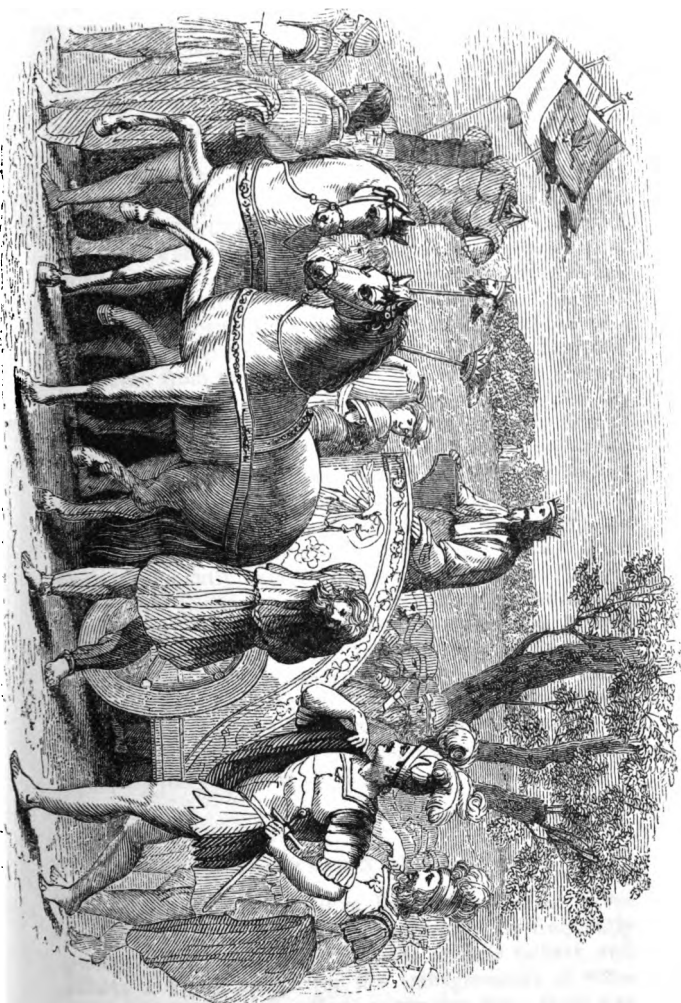
dead. Then David arose from the ground, and washed, and anointed himself: and when he had changed his apparel, he went into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: and then he came into his own house, and he called for bread, and ate. And his servants said to him: What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise up, and eat bread. And he said: While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept for him: for I said: Who knoweth whether the Lord may not give him to me, and the child may live? But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Shall I be able to bring him back any more? I shall go to him rather; but he shall not return to me.

After this, another son was born to David and Bethsabee, named Solomon, and the child found favour in the sight of God. David also marched himself against the Ammonites, took Rabba, and ended the war.

CHAP. IX. The Rebellion and Death of Absalom.

TERRIBLE calamities now fell upon David in the very bosom of his family, and from the time of his sin against Urias he never more knew perfect peace. One of his sons, Amnon, committed violence upon his half-sister Tamar; and when the tidings of the dreadful crime reached Tamar's brother Absalom, a son much beloved by his father David, filled with fury, Absalom treacherously slew his half-brother Amnon, instead of leaving the punishment of the sin to the proper authorities, and fled away. For a time the king was utterly overcome by this frightful calamity in his family; and while he would not suffer Absalom to return under pain of death, he himself was so completely overwhelmed that he could not attend to his common duties as a sovereign. At last, by a device of Joab, he was brought to pardon Absalom, and suffered him to come to his house, only forbidding him to appear in his father's presence.

David's clemency, however, only stirred up the pas-



sions of his headstrong son ; and Absalom proceeded to lay a plan for dethroning his father, and seizing the crown for himself. By feigning a great love for justice, and spreading evil reports against his father, he succeeded in forming so powerful a party in his favour, as to force David to flee as an exile from Jerusalem. Gaining thus possession of his father's house and of his wives, he committed every sort of wickedness. But his triumph was short-lived ; for David, with the help of Joab, gathered together a large body of the people, and defeated the adherents of his rebellious son. Absalom himself was caught by his head in the branches of a tree, as he rode from the field of battle ; and his horse galloping from under him, left him hanging in the air. Tidings of his situation were brought to Joab, and he, regardless of David's strict command that the life of Absalom should be spared, himself smote the young man to the heart, and he died there, hanging to the branches. But David mourned for the death of his beloved child, notwithstanding all his crimes, until the whole people were grieved at his selfish sorrow. Joab then vehemently remonstrated with him, and he resumed his former energies. He partly pardoned one man, Semei, who, at the time of his exile, had heaped curses upon him, promising to spare his life during his own lifetime. He rewarded Berzellai, a man of Gilead, who had provided him and his soldiers with provisions in their need ; and he excused Miphiboseth for his apparent neglect when the king was driven from his house by his rebellious child.

CHAP. X. David's sin in Numbering the People.

AFTER this time God sent to Israel one of those visitations by which, in His mysterious justice, He frequently punishes the children for the sins of their fathers, and afflicts a whole nation for the transgressions of some few among them. For three successive years there was a famine in the land ; and when David consulted the will

of the Lord by those means which God still permitted His people to learn His pleasure, he was told that it was for Saul and his bloody house, because he had broken the covenant made by Josue with the Gabaonites, and put many of them undeservedly to death. In accordance with the rules in which justice was frequently administered in those times, David then gave the Gabaonites the choice of the punishment that should be inflicted upon the descendants of their persecutor. They asked that seven of Saul's posterity should be given up to them to be put to death. This therefore was done, and the famine ceased.

David himself was now growing old, and in the pride of his heart he was seized with a desire to learn the exact numbers of the people whom he governed. This, indeed, was a forbidden thing; for God had promised to make the people innumerable, as the stars of the heaven or the sands on the sea-shore; and any wish to ascertain their precise amount was a sign of want of faith in the promises and protection of the Almighty. Even Joab, bloodthirsty and unprincipled as he was, remonstrated with the king on his determination; but in vain. David caused the reckoning to be made; and there appeared to be of the tribe of Juda (the largest of the tribes) 500,000 men capable of fighting in battle, and of the rest of the tribes 800,000. We may therefore conclude, that the whole population of the kingdom, including old and young, men and women, amounted to six or seven millions.

And David's heart struck him after the people were numbered: and David said to the Lord: I have sinned very much in what I have done: but I pray thee, O Lord, to take away the iniquity of Thy servant, because I have done exceeding foolishly. And David arose in the morning: and the word of the Lord came to Gad the prophet and the seer of David, saying: Go, and say to David: Thus saith the Lord: I give thee thy choice of three things: choose one of them which thou wilt, that I may do it to thee. And when Gad was come to David, he told him, saying: Either seven years of fa-

mine shall come to thee in thy land : or thou shalt flee three months before thy adversaries, and they shall pursue thee : or for three days there shall be a pestilence in thy land. Now therefore deliberate, and see what answer I shall return to Him that sent me. And David said to Gad : I am in a great strait : but it is better that I should fall into the hands of the Lord (for His mercies are many) than into the hands of men. And the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning unto the time appointed : and there died of the people from Dan to Bersabee seventy thousand men. And when the angel of the Lord had stretched out his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord had pity on the affliction ; and said to the angel that slew the people : It is enough : now hold thy hand. And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing-floor of Areuna the Jebusite. And David said to the Lord, when he saw the angel striking the people : It is I, I am he that have sinned ; I have done wickedly : these that are the sheep, what have they done ? let Thy hand, I beseech Thee, be turned against me, and against my father's house. And Gad came to David that day, and said : Go up, and build an altar to the Lord in the threshing-floor of Areuna the Jebusite. And David went up according to the word of Gad, which the Lord had commanded him. And Areuna looked, and saw the king and his servants coming towards him : and going out he worshipped the king, bowing with his face to the earth, and said : Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant ? And David said to him : To buy the threshing-floor of thee, and build an altar to the Lord, that the plague, which rageth among the people, may cease. And Areuna said to David : Let my lord the king take, and offer, as it seemeth good to him : thou hast here oxen for a holocaust, and the wain and the yokes of the oxen for wood. All these things Areuna as a king gave to the king : and Areuna said to the king : The Lord thy God receive thy vow. And the king answered him, and said : Nay, but I will buy it of thee at a price ; and I will not offer to the Lord my God holocausts free-cost. So David bought the floor, and

the oxen, for fifty sicles of silver : and David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered holocausts and peace-offerings : and the Lord became merciful to the land ; and the plague was stayed from Israel.

CHAP. XI. Solomon is made King. The Death of David.
The Judgment of Solomon.

INCREASING infirmities now warned the people of Israel that David's days were nearly ended. One of his sons, Adonias, preparing for his father's death, already proclaimed himself his successor ; and David had not strength to resist him. Nathan the prophet and Bethsabee went, therefore, to him, and urged him to lose no time in fulfilling his former promise, that Solomon should succeed him upon the throne ; and by their advice the king caused Solomon at once to be anointed sovereign over Israel. Adonias then fled to the altar of the Lord, and, laying hold upon it, claimed refuge and safety ; and Solomon promised it to him, so long as he should remain faithful and quiet. Solomon also received directions from his father to put to death Semei, whom he had spared during his own life, and also Joab, for the murders he had committed. Then, encouraging his son to be firm in his obedience to the Divine law, the aged monarch died in peace.

Solomon now married the daughter of the king of Egypt, and offered solemn sacrifices to God, to draw down His blessing upon his future reign. And the Lord appeared to him in a dream by night, saying : Ask what thou wilt that I should give thee. And Solomon said : Thou hast shewn great mercy to Thy servant David my father, even as he walked before Thee in truth, and justice, and an upright heart with Thee : and Thou hast kept Thy great mercy for him, and hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord God, Thou hast made Thy servant king instead of David my father : and I am but a child, and know not how to go out and come in. And Thy

servant is in the midst of the people which Thou hast chosen, an immense people, which cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore to Thy servant an understanding heart, to judge Thy people, and discern between good and evil. For who shall be able to judge this people Thy people which is so numerous. And the word was pleasing to the Lord that Solomon had asked such a thing. And the Lord said to Solomon: Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life nor riches, nor the lives of thy enemies, but hast asked for thyself wisdom to discern judgment, behold, I have done for thee according to thy words, and have given thee a wise and understanding heart; insomuch that there hath been no one like thee before thee, nor shall arise after thee. Yea, and the things also which thou didst not ask, I have given thee: to wit, riches and glory, so that no one hath been like thee among the kings in all days heretofore. And if thou wilt walk in My ways, and keep My precepts and My commandments, as thy father walked, I will lengthen thy days.

A singular dispute soon afterwards tried the sagacity of the new monarch; and the judgment he gave displayed the extraordinary wisdom with which God had endowed him. Two women had each a child born at the same time to them; but one of the children died, and its mother, anxious to possess an infant, though not really her own, appealed to the king, and declared solemnly that the living child was hers, and had been stolen from her by the other woman. No one could decide the quarrel; for no one knew any thing of what had happened; and each of the women, as they were both of them persons of bad character, was equally unworthy of being believed. Solomon, therefore, knowing what would be a mother's feelings towards her true child, commanded the living infant to be cut into two parts, and one part to be given to each of the women. As the king had expected, the real mother cried out in horror at the command, and entreated that, rather than the child should be slain, it should be taken

from her, and given to the other woman ; for thus at least its life would be preserved. The false mother, at the same time, was willing that the child should be cut into two pieces, as the king commanded. Solomon then saw which was the true and which the pretended mother, and he gave the child to the woman to whom it rightfully belonged.

CHAP. XII. The Building of the Temple, and its Dedication.

UNDER the rule of Solomon, the Israelites reached their highest point of temporal prosperity. The sovereign himself was distinguished for a supernatural degree of wisdom ; so much so, that his name was not only a proverb amongst the Jews, and has so continued to this day, but among other nations of the East his fame has not even yet passed way. He combined a universal acquaintance with all the learning and science of his time, with a most wonderful knowledge of the heart of man and of all that goes on in the world. He wrote the books of Proverbs, of Ecclesiastes, and the Canticle of Canticles, or Song of Solomon, which, under the symbols of natural love, prefigures the mutual love of Christ and His Church. The Book of Wisdom contains also Solomon's sentiments on many of the greatest subjects which can occupy the mind of man ; but it is not known who was its actual writer.

Israel was now at perfect peace ; and Solomon proceeded to put his father's plans into execution for the building a gorgeous temple to Almighty God in Jerusalem. For this purpose, he agreed with Hiram king of Tyre for the supply of timber from Mount Lebanon, and collected the ablest artists and workmen from the Jewish nation for the construction of the new edifice.

The temple, when completed, was not what we now should call a large building, for the nature of the Mosaic worship did not require the people themselves to be present within the building. The whole was not much larger than many an old village church in our country parishes. It consisted of two parts, like the old taber-

nacle. The first of these was about sixty feet long, thirty wide, and forty-five high, and was called the sanctuary. Beyond this was the holy of holies, divided from the sanctuary by a partition, and about thirty feet long, and the same height and width as the sanctuary. The walls and roof of the building were all covered with cedar, and the flooring was of fir; and the whole was covered with plates of gold. Neither axe nor hammer, nor any iron tool, was used in the construction, for the stones and all the materials were hewn and prepared before they were brought to the spot.

Within were placed the ark, the altars, the candlestick, and the other furniture for divine service, as in the tabernacle; with a vast number of golden vessels for every purpose that they could be needed. An immense brass laver, or sea (so called from its great size), was placed in the court of the temple, for washing, supported by twelve brazen oxen; another proof, in addition to various others, that the commandment that the Jews should *make* no images meant only that they should not make them for the purpose of turning them into idols.

Seven years passed in the building and completion of the whole; and when all was prepared, a vast assemblage of the people, with their chiefs, and elders, and priests, came together to the dedication, and to bring the ark into its new resting-place. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the sanctuary, that a cloud filled the house of the Lord. And the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord. Then Solomon said: The Lord said that He would dwell in a cloud. Building I have built a house for Thy dwelling, to be Thy most firm throne for ever. And the king turned his face, and blessed all the assembly of Israel: for all the assembly of Israel stood. And Solomon said: Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to David my father, and with His own hands hath accomplished it, saying: Since the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel, for a

house to be built, that My name might be there : but I chose David to be over My people Israel. And David my father would have built a house to the name of the Lord the God of Israel : and the Lord said to David my father : Whereas thou hast thought in thy heart to build a house to My name, thou hast done well in having this same thing in thy mind. Nevertheless thou shalt not build Me a house : but thy son, that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build a house to My name. The Lord hath performed His word which He spoke : and I stand in the room of David my father, and sit upon the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised ; and have built a house to the name of the Lord the God of Israel. And I have set there a place for the ark wherein is the covenant of the Lord, which He made with our fathers, when they came out of the land of Egypt. And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord, in the sight of the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands towards heaven ; and said : Lord God of Israel, there is no God like Thee in heaven above, or on earth beneath : who keepest covenant and mercy with Thy servants that have walked before Thee with all their heart : who hast kept with Thy servant David my father, what Thou hast promised him : with Thy mouth Thou didst speak, and with Thy hands Thou hast performed, as this day proveth. Now, therefore, O Lord God of Israel, keep with Thy servant David my father what Thou hast spoken to him, saying : There shall not be taken away of thee a man in My sight, to sit on the throne of Israel : yet so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before Me as thou hast walked in My sight. And now, Lord God of Israel, let Thy words be established, which Thou hast spoken to Thy servant David my father. Is it then to be thought that God should indeed dwell upon earth ? for if heaven, and the heavens of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built ? But have regard to the prayer of Thy servant, and to his supplications, O Lord my God : hear the hymn and the prayer, which Thy servant prayeth before Thee this day : that Thy eyes

may be open upon this house night and day ; upon the house of which Thou hast said : My name shall be there : that Thou mayst hearken to the prayer, which Thy servant prayeth in this place to Thee. That Thou mayst hearken to the supplication of Thy servant, and of Thy people Israel, whatsoever they shall pray for in this place ; and hear them in the place of Thy dwelling in heaven ; and when Thou hearest, shew them mercy. For they are Thy people and Thy inheritance, whom Thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron. That Thy eyes may be open to the supplication of Thy servant, and of Thy people Israel, to hear them in all things for which they shall call upon Thee. For Thou hast separated them to Thyself for an inheritance from among all the people of the earth, as Thou hast spoken by Moses Thy servant, when Thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God. And it came to pass, when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication to the Lord, that he rose from before the altar of the Lord : for he had fixed both knees on the ground, and had spread his hands toward heaven. And he stood, and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying : Blessed be the Lord, who hath given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised : there hath not failed so much as one word of all the good things that He promised by His servant Moses. The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers, and not leave us, nor cast us off : but may He incline our hearts to Himself, that we may walk in all His ways, and keep His commandments, and His ceremonies, and all His judgments which He commanded our fathers. And let these my words, wherewith I have prayed before the Lord, be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night, that He may do judgment for His servant, and for His people Israel day by day : that all the people of the earth may know, that the Lord He is God, and there is no other besides Him. Let our hearts also be perfect with the Lord our God, that we may walk in His statutes, and keep His commandments, as at this

day. And the king, and all Israel with him, offered victims before the Lord. And Solomon slew victims of peace-offerings, which he sacrificed to the Lord, two-and-twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep : so the king and the children of Israel dedicated the temple of the Lord.

For seven days the sacrifices and feastings continued ; and on the eighth day the people separated, and went to their dwellings rejoicing.

CHAP. XIII. The Queen of Saba. Solomon's Fall and Death.

AGAIN God vouchsafed to appear to Solomon, and said to him : I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, which thou hast made before Me : I have sanctified this house, which thou hast built, to put My name there for ever : and My eyes and My heart shall be there always. And if thou wilt walk before Me, as thy father walked, in simplicity of heart, and in uprightness ; and will do all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep My ordinances, and My judgments : I will establish the throne of thy kingdom over Israel for ever, as I promised David thy father, saying : There shall not fail a man of thy race upon the throne of Israel. But if you and your children revolting shall turn away from following Me ; and will not keep My commandments, and My ceremonies, which I have set before you ; but will go and worship strange gods, and adore them : I will take away Israel from the face of the land which I have given them : and the temple which I have sanctified to My name, I will cast out of My sight : and Israel shall be a proverb, and a by-word among all people. And this house shall be made an example of : every one that shall pass by it, shall be astonished, and shall hiss, and say : Why hath the Lord done thus to this land, and to this house ? And they shall answer : Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and followed strange gods, and

adored them, and worshipped them : therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil.

For many years Solomon continued faithful to his almighty Benefactor, and prospered far beyond the ordinary lot of human life. He built himself a superb palace ; his subjects grew more and more wealthy ; his fleets imported gold and precious woods from distant countries ; and his reputation for wisdom spread through the neighbouring nations. One foreign princess, the Queen of Saba, visited him in person, for the purpose of ascertaining whether his learning and wisdom were as great as fame reported them. She put to him every difficult question she could devise, and his answers convinced her that his reputation was even less than he deserved.

But in his old age Solomon fell into grievous sin. His wives, of whom he was vehemently fond, and some of whom came from idolatrous nations, persuaded him to offer worship to their false gods ; and he who had been the wisest of men bowed down in worship before the abominations of the heathen. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against him ; and He determined to divide the kingdom after Solomon's death, rending away ten of the tribes of Israel, and giving them to be governed by Jeroboam, one of Solomon's ablest officers, instead of preserving the whole kingdom to Solomon's son and successor upon his throne. It was only for the sake of David that the entire kingdom was not rent away from Solomon's family.

Having reigned forty years, Solomon died. The Bible does not tell us whether or not he repented of his idolatries before his death, but we may hope that it was so ; and it has been thought that in the book of Ecclesiastes the penitent monarch gives utterance to his final conviction of the vanity of all earthly blessings apart from God, who bestows them.

CHAP. XIV. Roboam and Jeroboam. The Division of the People.

ON the death of Solomon his authority descended, at first unbroken, to his son Roboam. Jeroboam, however, who had been banished by Solomon, immediately returned to his country, and headed a deputation of the people to the young monarch, which went to claim exemption from the heavy taxes and service which had been exacted from them by Solomon. And they laid their grievances before him, saying: Thy father laid a grievous yoke upon us: now therefore do thou take off a little of the grievous service of thy father, and of his most heavy yoke, which he put upon us; and we will serve thee. And he said to them: Go till the third day, and come to me again. And when the people was gone, King Roboam took counsel with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived: and he said: What counsel do you give me, that I may answer this people? They said to him: If thou wilt yield to this people to-day, and condescend to them, and grant their petition, and wilt speak gentle words to them, they will be thy servants always. But he left the counsel of the old men, which they had given him; and consulted with the young men that had been brought up with him, and stood before him. And he said to them: What counsel do you give me, that I may answer this people, who have said to me: Make the yoke which thy father put upon us lighter? And the young men that had been brought up with him, said: Thus shalt thou speak to this people, who have spoken to thee, saying: Thy father made our yoke heavy; do thou ease us. Thou shalt say to them: My little finger is thicker than the back of my father. And now my father put a heavy yoke upon you; but I will add to your yoke: my father beat you with whips; but I will beat you with scorpions. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Roboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying: Come to me again the third day. And the king answered the people roughly, leaving the counsel of the old men,

which they had given him. And he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying: My father made your yoke heavy; but I will add to your yoke: my father beat you with whips; but I will beat you with scorpions.

Thus repulsed by the folly of the young prince, ten of the twelve tribes instantly set up Jeroboam for their king, and cast off their allegiance to Roboam. Juda and Benjamin alone remained faithful; but from the great numbers and remarkable bravery of the men of Juda, Roboam was still the most powerful monarch of the two. Jerusalem also, where was the seat of government and the temple of the Lord, continued in his possession, being situated in the territory of Juda. This last circumstance was, further, the cause of the wrath of God coming down upon Jeroboam and his family. God had promised him His divine protection, both for himself and his posterity, if he would serve Him with a true heart; but by his very first royal act Jeroboam turned away from God, and drew down the vengeance of God upon him. He was afraid that if the people of the ten tribes went up yearly to Jerusalem, as they had been accustomed, to offer sacrifice to the Lord, they would soon fall away from their allegiance to him, and return to be the servants of Roboam. Distrusting, therefore, the promises of God, he thought to secure his kingdom to himself by setting up false gods, and bidding the people worship them, instead of travelling every year to Jerusalem. He made two golden images of calves, which were common objects of idolatrous honours among the Egyptians and Chanaanites; and setting up one of them in Dan and the other in Bethel, he proclaimed to his subjects that these were their true gods, who had brought them out of their ancient captivity in Egypt. At the same time, as the tribe of Levi remained attached to the temple in Jerusalem, he chose out a number of men of the lowest character, and made them priests to offer his idolatrous sacrifices; and appointed a great yearly national feast, similar to that which was celebrated in honour of the true God at Jerusalem.

CHAP. XV. The Disobedient Prophet.

THUS the children of Israel were divided into two kingdoms, and so they remained, almost always foes instead of friends, till both of them ceased to be any more an independent people. Those who remained under the rule of David's descendants were henceforth called the people of Juda, and their chief city was Jerusalem; the other ten tribes were called the people of Israel, and their capital was Samaria.

Scarcely had Jeroboam commenced his idolatrous practices, when God denounced his crimes by the mouth of a prophet. There came a man of God out of Juda, by the word of the Lord, to Bethel, when Jeroboam was standing upon the altar, and burning incense. And he cried out against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said: O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born to the house of David, Josias by name: and he shall immolate upon thee the priests of the high places, who now burn incense upon thee: and he shall burn men's bones upon thee. And he gave a sign the same day, saying: This shall be the sign, that the Lord hath spoken: Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out. And when the king had heard the word of the man of God, which he had cried out against the altar in Bethel, he stretched forth his hand from the altar, saying: Lay hold on him. And his hand which he stretched forth against him withered: and he was not able to draw it back again to him. The altar also was rent: and the ashes were poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given before in the word of the Lord. And the king said to the man of God: Entreat the face of the Lord thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me. And the man of God besought the face of the Lord; and the king's hand was restored to him; and it became as it was before. And the king said to the man of God: Come home with me to dine; and I will make thee presents. And the man of God answered the king: If thou wouldst give

me half thy house, I will not go with thee, nor eat bread, nor drink water in this place : for so it was enjoined me by the word of the Lord commanding me : Thou shalt not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way that thou camest. So he departed by another way, and returned not by the way that he came into Bethel. Now a certain old prophet dwelt in Bethel : and his sons came to him ; and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel : and they told their father the words which he had spoken to the king. And their father said to them : What way went he ? his sons shewed him the way by which the man of God went, who came out of Juda. And he said to his sons : Saddle me the ass. And when they had saddled him, he got up, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under a turpentine-tree : and he said to him : Art thou the man of God that camest from Juda ? He answered : I am. And he said to him : Come home with me, to eat bread. But he said : I must not return, or go with thee ; neither will I eat bread, nor drink water in this place : because the Lord spoke to me in the word of the Lord, saying : Thou shalt not eat bread, and thou shalt not drink water there, nor return by the way thou wentest. He said to him : I also am a prophet like unto thee : and an angel spoke to me in the word of the Lord, saying : Bring him back with thee into thy house, that he may eat bread, and drink water. This indeed was a falsehood, rendered doubly wicked by its claim to be a divine revelation ; but it proved a fatal temptation to the prophet to whom it was spoken, who sinned in being ready to disobey what he well knew to be a command from God on the first excuse that appeared plausible to him. He suffered himself to be persuaded by the old prophet, and went back with him, and ate and drank in his house.

And as they sat at table, the word of the Lord, who employs men to do His bidding, notwithstanding their own sins and infirmities, came to the prophet that brought the other back. And he cried out to the man

of God who came out of Juda, saying: Thus saith the Lord: Because thou hast not been obedient to the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, and hast returned and eaten bread, and drunk water in the place wherein He commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat bread, nor drink water, thy dead body shall not be brought into the sepulchre of thy fathers. And when he had eaten and drunk, he saddled his ass for the prophet, whom he had brought back. And when he was gone, a lion found him in the way, and killed him: and his body was cast in the way: and the ass stood by him; and the lion stood by the dead body. And behold, men passing by saw the dead body cast in the way, and the lion standing by the body. And they came and told it in the city, wherein that old prophet dwelt. And when that prophet, who had brought him back out of the way, heard of it, he said: It is the man of God, that was disobedient to the mouth of the Lord: and the Lord hath delivered him to the lion: and he hath torn him, and killed him according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke to him. And he said to his sons: Saddle me an ass. And when they had saddled, and when he was gone, he found the dead body cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass; the lion had not eaten of the dead body, nor hurt the ass. And the prophet took up the body of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass; and going back, brought it into the city of the old prophet, to mourn for him. And he laid his dead body in his own sepulchre: and they mourned over him, saying: Alas! alas! my brother. And when they had mourned over him, he said to his sons: When I am dead, bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried: lay my bones beside his bones: for assuredly the word shall come to pass which he hath foretold in the word of the Lord against the altar that is in Bethel, and against all the temples of the high places that are in the cities of Samaria.

CHAP. XVI. The Successors of Roboam and Jeroboam.
Elias and the Widow's Son.

ROBOAM reigned seventeen years over Juda, and under his rule idolatry spread over the land. The people built altars, carved images, and planted groves of trees in honour of their idols, as was the custom with the heathen, upon the high hills, and in every way debased and defiled themselves with sin. The vengeance of God fell upon them, and the reigning king of Egypt invaded their country and took Jerusalem, and carried off many of the treasures which Solomon had gathered together in the house of the Lord.

When Roboam died, his son Abiam succeeded him, and for the three years of his reign imitated all his father's sins. Abiam's son Asa returned to the true faith, cut down the idolatrous groves and burnt the idols, and for many years governed his people in peace. Towards the end of his reign he sinned in depending upon an alliance with the Syrians, to defend him against Baasa the king of Israel, rather than in trusting to God alone. After ruling forty-one years, he was succeeded by his son Josaphat.

Meanwhile, idolatry and wickedness were triumphant in the ten tribes of Israel. Jeroboam was succeeded by his son Nadab, who, after an idolatrous reign of two years, was murdered by Baasa, one of his subjects, who seized the vacant throne and cut off every one of his family. Baasa reigned four-and-twenty years, as wickedly as his predecessor; and his son Ela, who succeeded him, was murdered by Zambri, one of his generals. Zambri again was attacked by the people whom he sought to govern, and burnt in the royal palace; and another general, Amri, was made king. He again followed the path of Jeroboam, and when he died, transferred the throne to his son Achab, a prince, if possible, worse than all who had gone before him, and married to a heathen queen, named Jezabel.

Notwithstanding, however, the almost universal pro-

fligacy of the age, a chosen few still remained faithful to God, and never bowed the knee to Baal, or any other of the idol-gods. Of these hidden faithful ones, for they were scarcely known amidst the multitudes of the idolaters, Elias, or Elijah, the Thesbite, was distinguished by God with His choicest favours. He was a prophet, and was employed many times by the Almighty to warn his miserable countrymen of their sins, and was a special figure of the Baptist who was hereafter to appear before the coming of the Redeemer, and prepare His way by preaching repentance, as Elias had done. The Scripture first records his being sent to his sovereign Achab, and saying: As the Lord liveth the God of Israel, in whose sight I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to the words of my mouth. And the word of the Lord came to him, saying: Get thee hence, and go towards the east; and hide thyself by the torrent of Carith, which is over-against the Jordan. And there thou shalt drink of the torrent: and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went, and did according to the word of the Lord: and going, he dwelt by the torrent Carith, which is over-against the Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening: and he drank of the torrent. But after some time the torrent was dried up: for it had not rained upon the earth. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying: Arise, and go to Sarephta of the Sidonians, and dwell there: for I have commanded a widow-woman there to feed thee. He arose, and went to Sarephta. And when he was come to the gate of the city, he saw the widow-woman gathering sticks; and he called her, and said to her: Give me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And when she was going to fetch it, he called after her, saying: Bring me also, I beseech thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand. And she answered: As the Lord thy God liveth, I have no bread, but only a handful of meal in a pot, and a little oil in a cruse; behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and

die. And Elias said to her : Fear not : but go, and do as thou hast said ; but first make for me of the same meal a little hearth-cake, and bring it to me ; and after make for thyself and thy son. For thus saith the Lord the God of Israel : The pot of meal shall not waste, nor the cruse of oil be diminished, until the day wherein the Lord will give rain upon the face of the earth. She went, and did according to the word of Elias : and he ate, and she, and her house : and from that day the pot of meal wasted not, and the cruse of oil was not diminished, according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke in the hand of Elias. And it came to pass after this, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick : and the sickness was very grievous, so that there was no breath left in him. And she said to Elias : What have I to do with thee, thou man of God ? art thou come to me that my iniquities should be remembered, and that thou shouldst kill my son ? And Elias said to her : Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him into the upper chamber where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried to the Lord, and said : O Lord my God, hast Thou afflicted also the widow, with whom I am after a sort maintained, so as to kill her son ? And he stretched, and measured himself upon the child three times ; and cried to the Lord, and said : O Lord my God, let the soul of this child, I beseech Thee, return into his body. And the Lord heard the voice of Elias : and the soul of the child returned into him : and he revived. And Elias took the child, and brought him down from the upper chamber to the house below, and delivered him to his mother, and said to her : Behold, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elias : Now, by this I know that thou art a man of God : and the word of the Lord in thy mouth is true.

CHAP. XVII. Elias and the Priests of Baal.

AFTER a while the word of the Lord came again to the prophet, saying: Go, and shew thyself to Achab, that I may give rain upon the face of the earth. And Elias went to shew himself to Achab: and there was a grievous famine in Samaria. And Achab called Abdias the governor of his house: now Abdias feared the Lord very much. For when Jezabel killed the prophets of the Lord, he took a hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty and fifty in caves, and fed them with bread and water. And Achab said to Abdias: Go into the land unto all fountains of waters, and into all valleys, to see if we can find grass, and save the horses and mules, that the beasts may not utterly perish. And they divided the countries between them, that they might go round about them: Achab went one way, and Abdias another way by himself. And as Abdias was in the way, Elias met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said: Art thou my lord Elias? And he answered: I am. Go, and tell thy master: Elias is here. And he said: What have I sinned, that thou wouldst deliver me thy servant into the hand of Achab, that he should kill me? As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my Lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when all answered: He is not here; he took an oath of every kingdom and nation, because thou wast not found. And now thou sayest to me: Go, and tell thy master: Elias is here. And when I am gone from thee, the Spirit of the Lord will carry thee into a place that I know not: and I shall go in and tell Achab, and he not finding thee, will kill me: but thy servant feareth the Lord from his infancy. Hath it not been told thee, my lord, what I did when Jezabel killed the prophets of the Lord; how I hid a hundred men of the prophets of the Lord, by fifty and fifty in caves, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest: Go, and tell thy master: Elias is here: that he may kill me. And Elias said: As the Lord of

hosts liveth, before whose face I stand, this day I will shew myself unto him. Abdias therefore went to meet Achab, and told him : and Achab came to meet Elias. And when he had seen him, he said : Art thou he that troublest Israel ? And he said : I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, who have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and have followed Baalim. Nevertheless send now, and gather unto me all Israel, unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, who eat at Jezabel's table. Achab sent to all the children of Israel, and gathered together the prophets unto mount Carmel. And Elias coming to all the people, said : How long do you halt between two sides ? If the Lord be God, follow Him : but if Baal, then follow him. And the people did not answer him a word. And Elias said again to the people : I only remain a prophet of the Lord : but the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty men. Let two bullocks be given us : and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it upon wood, but put no fire under : and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under it. Call ye on the names of your gods ; and I will call on the name of my Lord : and the God that shall answer by fire, let him be God. And all the people answering, said : A very good proposal. Then Elias said to the prophets of Baal : Choose you one bullock, and dress it first, because you are many : and call on the names of your gods ; but put no fire under. And they took the bullock which he gave them, and dressed it : and they called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying : O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered : and they leaped over the altar that they had made. And when it was now noon, Elias jested at them, saying : Cry with a louder voice : for he is a god ; and perhaps he is talking, or is in an inn, or on a journey ; or perhaps he is asleep, and must be awaked. So they cried with a loud voice ; and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till they

were all covered with blood. And after mid-day was past, and while they were prophesying, the time was come of offering sacrifice ; and there was no voice heard, nor did any one answer, nor regard them as they prayed : Elias said to all the people : Come ye unto me. And the people coming near unto him, he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down : and he took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord came, saying : Israel shall be thy name. And he built with the stones an altar to the name of the Lord : and he made a trench for water, of the breadth of two furrows round about the altar. And he laid the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it upon the wood ; and he said : Fill four buckets with water, and pour it upon the burnt-offering, and upon the wood. And again he said : Do the same the second time. And when they had done it the second time, he said : Do the same also the third time. And they did so the third time. And the water ran round about the altar : and the trench was filled with water. And when it was now time to offer the holocaust, Elias the prophet came near, and said : O Lord God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Israel, shew this day that Thou art the God of Israel, and I Thy servant ; and that according to Thy commandment I have done all these things. Hear me, O Lord, hear me ; that this people may learn that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart again. Then the fire of the Lord fell ; and consumed the holocaust, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust ; and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw this, they fell on their faces, and they said : The Lord He is God, the Lord He is God. And Elias said to them : Take the prophets of Baal ; and let not one of them escape. And when they had taken them, Elias brought them down to the torrent Cison, and killed them there. And Elias said to Achab : Go up, eat, and drink : for there is a sound of abundance of rain. Achab went up to eat and drink : and Elias went up to the top of Carmel : and casting himself down

upon the earth, put his face between his knees : and he said to his servant : Go up, and look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said : There is nothing. And again he said to him : Return seven times. And at the seventh time, behold, a little cloud arose out of the sea like a man's foot. And he said : Go up, and say to Achab : Prepare thy chariot, and go down, lest the rain prevent thee. And while he turned himself this way and that way, behold, the heavens grew dark with clouds and wind ; and there fell a great rain. And Achab getting up, went away to Jezrahel : and the hand of the Lord was upon Elias : and he girded up his loins, and ran before Achab, till he came to Jezrahel.

CHAP. XVIII. Elias in the Desert.

AND Achab told Jezabel all that Elias had done, and how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. And Jezabel sent a messenger to Elias, saying : Such and such things may the gods do to me, and add still more, if by this hour to-morrow I make not thy life as the life of one of them. Then Elias was afraid : and rising up he went whithersoever he had a mind : and he came to Bersabee of Juda, and left his servant there : and he went forward, one day's journey into the desert. And when he was there, and sat under a juniper-tree, he requested for his soul that he might die ; and said : It is enough for me, Lord ; take away my soul : for I am no better than my fathers. And he cast himself down, and slept in the shadow of the juniper-tree : and behold, an angel of the Lord touched him, and said to him : Arise, and eat. He looked, and behold, there was at his head a hearth-cake, and a vessel of water : and he ate and drank ; and he fell asleep again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said to him : Arise, eat ; for thou hast yet a great way to go. And he arose, and ate, and drank ; and walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto the mount of God, Horeb. And when he

was come thither, he abode in a cave : and behold, the word of the Lord came unto him : and He said to him : What doest thou here, Elias ? And he answered : With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of hosts : for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant : they have thrown down Thy altars ; they have slain Thy prophets with the sword ; and I alone am left ; and they seek my life to take it away. And He said to him : Go forth, and stand upon the mount, before the Lord : and behold, the Lord passeth ; and a great and strong wind before the Lord overthrowing the mountains, and breaking the rocks in pieces : the Lord is not in the wind : and after the wind an earthquake : the Lord is not in the earthquake : and after the earthquake a fire : the Lord is not in the fire : and after the fire a whistling of a gentle air. And when Elias heard it, he covered his face with his mantle, and coming forth stood in the entering in of the cave ; and behold, a voice unto him, saying : What doest thou here, Elias ? And he answered : With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of hosts : because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant : they have destroyed thy altars : they have slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I alone am left ; and they seek my life to take it away. And the Lord said to him : Go, and return on thy way through the desert to Damascus : and when thou art come thither, thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. And thou shalt anoint Jehu the son of Namsi to be king over Israel : and Eliseus the son of Saphat, of Abelmeula, thou shalt anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall escape the sword of Hazael, shall be slain by Jehu : and whosoever shall escape the sword of Jehu, shall be slain by Eliseus. And I will leave me seven thousand men in Israel, whose knees have not been bowed before Baal, and every mouth that hath not worshipped him, kissing the hands. And Elias departing from thence, found Eliseus the son of Saphat, ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen : and he was one of them that were ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen : and when Elias came up

to him, he cast his mantle upon him. And he forthwith left the oxen, and ran after Elias, and said: Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother; and then I will follow thee. And he said to him: Go, and return back: for that which was my part, I have done to thee. And returning back from him, he took a yoke of oxen and killed them, and boiled the flesh with the plough of the oxen, and gave to the people; and they ate: and rising up he went away, and followed Elias, and ministered to him.

CHAP. XIX. The Murder of Naboth.

NABOTH, a man of Jezrahel, had at this time a vineyard near the palace of Achab king of Samaria. And Achab spoke to Naboth, saying: Give me thy vineyard, that I may make me a garden of herbs, because it is nigh, and joining to my house; and I will give thee for it a better vineyard: or if thou think it more convenient for thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. Naboth answered him: The Lord be merciful to me, and not let me give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And Achab came into his house angry and fretting, because of the word that Naboth the Jezrahelite had spoken to him, saying: I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And casting himself upon his bed, he turned away his face to the wall, and would eat no bread. And Jezabel his wife went in to him, and said to him: What is the matter that thy soul is so grieved? and why eatest thou no bread? And he answered her: I spoke to Naboth the Jezrahelite, and said to him: Give me thy vineyard, and take money for it: or if it please thee, I will give thee a better vineyard for it. And he said: I will not give thee my vineyard. Then Jezabel his wife said to him: Thou art of great authority indeed, and governest well the kingdom of Israel. Arise, and eat bread, and be of good cheer: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezrahelite. So she wrote letters in Achab's name, and sealed them with his ring,

and sent them to the ancients, and the chief men that were in his city, and that dwelt with Naboth. And this was the tenor of the letters : Proclaim a fast : and make Naboth sit among the chief of the people : and suborn two men, sons of Belial, against him : and let them bear false witness, that he hath blasphemed God and the king : and then carry him out, and stone him, and so let him die. And the men of his city, the ancients and nobles, that dwelt with him in the city, did as Jezabel had commanded them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent to them : they proclaimed a fast, and made Naboth sit among the chief of the people. And bringing two men, sons of the devil, they made them sit against him : and they, like men of the devil, bore witness against him before the people, saying : Naboth hath blasphemed God and the king : wherefore they brought him forth without the city, and stoned him to death. And they sent to Jezabel, saying : Naboth is stoned, and is dead. And it came to pass, when Jezabel heard that Naboth was stoned, and dead, that she said to Achab : Arise, and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezrahelite, who would not agree with thee, and give it thee for money : for Naboth is not alive, but dead. And when Achab heard this, to wit, that Naboth was dead, he arose, and went down into the vineyard of Naboth the Jezrahelite, to take possession of it. And the word of the Lord came to Elias the Thesbite, saying : Arise, and go down to meet Achab king of Israel, who is in Samaria : behold, he is going down to the vineyard of Naboth, to take possession of it : and thou shalt speak to him, saying : Thus saith the Lord : Thou hast slain, moreover also thou hast taken possession. And after these words thou shalt add : Thus saith the Lord : In this place, wherein the dogs have licked the blood of Naboth, they shall lick thy blood also. And Achab said to Elias : Hast thou found me thy enemy ? He said : I have found thee, because thou art sold, to do evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and cut off all thy posterity. And I will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son

of Nabat, and like the house of Baasa the son of Ahias : for what thou hast done, to provoke Me to anger, and for making Israel to sin. And of Jezabel also the Lord spoke, saying : The dogs shall eat Jezabel in the field of Jezrahel. If Achab die in the city, the dogs shall eat him : but if he die in the field, the birds of the air shall eat him.

And when Achab heard the prophet's words, he rent his garments, and put hair-cloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and slept in sackcloth, and walked with his head cast down. And the word of the Lord came to Elias the Thesbite, saying : Hast thou not seen Achab humbled before Me ? therefore, because he hath humbled himself for my sake, I will not bring the evil in his days ; but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

CHAP. XX. The Death of Achab. Elias calls fire from Heaven.

ACHAB's cup of iniquity was now about to be filled to the brim ; for his repentance was not such as would endure ; and he never turned to God with his whole heart. He engaged in a war with the Syrians, and entered into a defensive league with Josaphat the king of Juda. Before marching to battle, Achab consulted his pretended prophets, and with one flattering voice they promised him success over his enemies. But Josaphat, a pious man, was not content without asking counsel of a prophet of the true God. Achab replied that he knew of one only, Micheas by name ; and that he hated him, because he always prophesied evil of him. Nevertheless, Josaphat insisted upon his being sent for ; and Micheas at once foretold that Achab would be slain. Filled with indignation, Achab ordered him to prison, until he should return in safety ; but, nevertheless, he took the precaution of going into the fight without his royal dress, that he might not be made a special object of attack by the enemy's troops. But vain was all his care. In the battle that ensued, a random arrow, shot by a man at a venture, mortally wounded the king of Israel, and he

died that evening. And his chariot was washed in a pool, and the dogs licked up the blood that had flowed from his wound into it, as the Lord had foretold.

Josaphat returned in safety from the field, and the war between Syria and the people of Juda and Israel was ended. Achab was succeeded by his son Ochozias, and Josaphat, when he afterwards died, by his son Joram.

The earthly days of the great prophet were also now drawing to a close ; but before his departure God gave a fresh token to the guilty Israelites of the honour due to His faithful servant. Ochozias the king was injured by a fall, and instead of asking advice of Elias, he sent to consult the idol-god Beelzebub. The messengers on their way were met by Elias, who bade them return with a reproof from God to their master. When the king heard their story, he inquired who the man was who had met them. And when they described him as a hairy man, with a leather girdle about his loins, he knew that it was Elias ; and sent a captain, and a troop of fifty men, with an insolent message to the prophet to appear before the king. The captain, finding Elias sitting upon a hill, cried out to him : Man of God, the king hath commanded thee that thou come down. And Elias said, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty men. And the fire came and burned them all. Again the king sent another troop, who met the same awful fate. A third captain, when despatched, fell on his knees before the prophet, and humbly entreated him to spare his life. And God bade Elias go with him to the king. And he went and told the king that he should never rise from his bed of sickness. And the king died, and his brother Joram reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XXI. Elias taken up to Heaven.

It was the will of God that Elias should not die the common death of men. When his time was come for

departure from this world, he was going with his follower Eliseus from Galgal. And he said to Eliseus: Stay here, because the Lord hath sent me as far as Bethel. And Eliseus said to him: As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And when they were come down to Bethel, the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Eliseus, and said to him: Dost thou know that this day the Lord will take away thy master from thee? And he answered: I also know it: hold your peace. And Elias said to Eliseus: Stay here, because the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And he said: As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And when they were come to Jericho, the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Eliseus, and said to him: Dost thou know that this day the Lord will take away thy master from thee? And he said: I also know it: hold your peace. And Elias said to him: Stay here, because the Lord hath sent me as far as the Jordan. And he said: As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on together. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets followed them, and stood in sight at a distance: but they two stood by the Jordan. And Elias took his mantle, and folded it together, and struck the waters; and they were divided hither and thither: and they both passed over on dry ground. And when they were gone over, Elias said to Eliseus: Ask what thou wilt have me to do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Eliseus said: I beseech thee that in me may be thy double spirit. And he answered: Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, thou shalt have what thou hast asked; but if thou see me not, thou shalt not have it. And as they went on, walking and talking together, behold, a fiery chariot and fiery horses parted them both asunder; and Elias went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Eliseus saw him, and cried: My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the driver thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own garments, and rent

them in two pieces. And he took up the mantle of Elias that fell from him : and going back he stood upon the bank of the Jordan : and he struck the waters with the mantle of Elias that had fallen from him ; and they were not divided. And he said : Where is now the God of Elias ? And he struck the waters, and they were divided hither and thither ; and Eliseus passed over. And the sons of the prophets at Jericho, who were over-against him, seeing it, said : The spirit of Elias hath rested upon Eliseus. And coming to meet him, they worshipped him, falling to the ground, and they said to him : Behold, there are with thy servants fifty strong men, that can go and seek thy master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley. And he said : Do not send. But they pressed him, till he consented, and said : Send. And they sent fifty men : and they sought three days, but found him not. And they came back to him ; for he abode at Jericho ; and he said to them : Did I not say to you : Do not send ? And the men of the city said to Eliseus : Behold, the situation of this city is very good, as thou my lord seest ; but the waters are very bad, and the ground barren. And he said : Bring me a new vessel, and put salt into it. And when they had brought it, he went out to the spring of the waters, and cast the salt into it ; and said : Thus saith the Lord : I have healed these waters ; and there shall be no more in them death or barrenness. And the waters were healed unto this day, according to the word of Eliseus, which he spoke. And he went up from thence to Bethel : and as he was going up by the way, little boys came out of the city, and mocked him, saying : Go up, thou bald-head : go up, thou bald-head. And looking back, he saw them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord : and there came forth two bears out of the forest, and tore of them two-and-forty boys.

CHAP. XXII. The Miracles of Eliseus.

THE prophet Eliseus is distinguished above all the other Jewish prophets by the number of miracles which he wrought. His miracles, also, were for the most part worked for purposes which unbelievers account trifling, and unworthy of the interposition of Almighty power. They were generally of a private and almost household character; and bear a great resemblance to the miracles which were done by some of the Saints of the Christian Church some time after the days of the Apostles.

The first instance which the Scriptures record of the aid he furnished to his fellow-countrymen is not perhaps miraculous, except in this: that the prophet was guided by Divine inspiration in the course he followed. The kings of Israel and Juda were leagued with the king of Edom in a war against the Moabites, and want of water reduced the confederate army to extreme distress. In their trouble they summoned Eliseus; and for the sake of the pious king of Juda, the prophet listened to their prayer that he would intercede with God on their behalf. He sent for a minstrel; and as the minstrel played upon his instrument, the Spirit of God came upon Eliseus, and he bade them cut the whole bed of a dried-up river, near which they were encamped, into a number of ditches. The next day, though there was no rain, the ditches were filled, and the people drank of the water. The Moabites, also, saw the red reflection of the morning sun's rays upon the surface of the pools; and supposing it to be blood, imagined that the three kings had quarrelled and fought, rushed in rash disorder upon the camp of the allies, where they were received with unlooked-for resistance, and met a bloody defeat. The conquerors followed up the victory by laying waste the territory of Moab; until a frightful example of Gentile superstition struck the Israelites with horror. The king of Edom took his own son and offered him up as a burnt-sacrifice to his idol-gods, in the sight of the hostile armies; and the Israelites, filled with in-

dignation at the bloody sight, put an end to their expedition, and returned to their own country.

After this the aid of the prophet was entreated by a poor widow, whose two sons were about to be seized and made slaves by a creditor for a debt she owed, and could not pay. And Eliseus said to her: What wilt thou have me to do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in thy house? And she answered: I thy handmaid have nothing in my house but a little oil to anoint me. And he said to her: Go, borrow of all thy neighbours empty vessels not a few. And go in, and shut thy door, when thou art within, and thy sons; and pour out thereof into all those vessels: and when they are full, take them away. So the woman went, and shut the door upon her, and upon her sons: they brought her the vessels, and she poured in. And when the vessels were full, she said to her son: Bring me yet a vessel. And he answered: I have no more. And the oil stood. And she came, and told the man of God. And he said: Go, sell the oil, and pay thy creditor: and thou and thy sons live of the rest.

CHAP. XXIII. Eliseus raises a dead child to life.

IN the course of his journeys the prophet often passed through the town of Sunam, and was there entertained by a pious woman and her husband, who at length fitted up a small room for his use, that whenever he pleased he might lodge there. At last, in return for the devout woman's attentions, he asked her what he could do for her in return; and finding what it was she most desired, he promised her that though she was now advanced in years, and childless, a son should be born to her. And the child was born, and grew up; and on a certain day, when he went out to his father, to the reapers, he said to his father: My head acheth: my head acheth. But he said to his servant: Take him, and carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, she set him on

her knees until noon: and then he died. And she went up, and laid him upon the bed of the man of God, and shut the door: and going out, she called her husband, and said: Send with me, I beseech thee, one of thy servants, and an ass, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. And he said to her: Why dost thou go to him? to-day is neither new moon nor Sabbath. She answered: I will go. And she saddled an ass, and commanded her servant: Drive, and make haste; make no stay in going. And do that which I bid thee. So she went forward, and came to the man of God to mount Carmel: and when the man of God saw her coming towards him, he said to Giezi his servant: Behold that Sunamitess. Go therefore to meet her, and say to her: Is all well with thee, and with thy husband, and with thy son? And she answered: Well. And when she came to the man of God to the mount, she caught hold on his feet: and Giezi came to remove her. And the man of God said: Let her alone; for her soul is in anguish: and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. And she said to him: Did I ask a son of my lord? did I not say to thee: Do not deceive me? Then he said to Giezi: Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thy hand, and go. If any man meet thee, salute him not: and if any man salute thee, answer him not: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. But the mother of the child said: As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. He arose, therefore, and followed her. But Giezi was gone before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child: and there was no voice nor sense: and he returned to meet him, and told him, saying: The child is not risen. Eliseus therefore went into the house: and behold, the child lay dead on his bed.

And he went in, and shut the door, and prayed to the Lord. And he went up, and lay upon the child: and he put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he bowed himself upon him; and the child's flesh grew warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house,

once to and fro : and he went up, and lay upon him : and the child gaped seven times, and opened his eyes. And he called Giezi, and said to him : Call this Sunamitess. And when she came, he said : Take up thy son : and she came and fell at his feet, and worshipped on the ground : and took her son, and went out.

And Eliseus returned to Galgal ; and there was a famine in the land ; and the sons of the prophets dwelt before him. And he said to one of his servants : Set on the great pot, and boil pottage for the sons of the prophets. And one went out into the field to gather wild herbs : and he found something like a wild vine, and gathered of it wild gourds of the field, and filled his mantle ; and coming back, he shred them into the pot of pottage : for he knew not what it was. And they poured it out for their companions to eat : and when they had tasted of the pottage, they cried out, saying : Death is in the pot, O man of God. And they could not eat thereof. But he said : Bring some meal. And when they had brought it, he cast it into the pot, and said : Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was now no bitterness in the pot. And a certain man came from Baalsalisa, bringing to the man of God bread of the first-fruits, twenty loaves of barley and new corn in his scrip. And he said : Give to the people, that they may eat. And his servant answered him : How much is this, that I should set it before a hundred men ? He said again : Give to the people, that they may eat : for thus saith the Lord : They shall eat ; and there shall be left. So he set it before them : and they ate ; and there was left according to the word of the Lord.

CHAP. XXIV. Naaman the Syrian.

NAAMAN, general of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable : for by him the Lord gave deliverance to Syria ; and he was a valiant man, and rich, but a leper. Now there had gone out robbers from Syria, and had led away captive

out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited upon Naaman's wife. And she said to her mistress: I wish my master had been with the prophet that is in Samaria; he would certainly have healed him of the leprosy which he hath. Then Naaman went into his lord, and told him, saying: Thus and thus saith the girl from the land of Israel. And the king of Syria said to him: Go, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel. And he departed; and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment; and brought the letter to the king of Israel, in these words: When thou shalt receive this letter, know that I have sent to thee Naaman my servant, that thou mayest heal him of his leprosy. And when the king of Israel had read the letter, he rent his garments, and said: Am I God, to be able to kill and give life, that this man hath sent to me, to heal a man of his leprosy? mark, and see how he seeketh occasions against me. And when Eliseus the man of God had heard this, to wit, that the king of Israel had rent his garments, he sent to him, saying: Why hast thou rent thy garments? let him come to me, and let him know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Eliseus. And Eliseus sent a messenger to him, saying: Go, and wash seven times in the Jordan: and thy flesh shall recover health; and thou shalt be clean. Naaman was angry, and went away saying: I thought he would have come out to me, and standing would have invoked the name of the Lord his God, and touched with his hand the place of the leprosy, and healed me. Are not the Abana, and the Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel, that I may wash in them, and be made clean? So as he turned, and was going away with indignation, His servants came to him, and said to him: Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, surely thou shouldst have done it: how much rather what he now hath said to thee: Wash, and thou shalt be clean? Then he went down, and washed in the Jordan seven times, according

to the word of the man of God : and his flesh was restored, like the flesh of a little child ; and he was made clean. And returning to the man of God with all his train, he came, and stood before him, and said : In truth I know there is no other God in all the earth, but only in Israel : I beseech thee therefore take a blessing of thy servant. But he answered : As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And when he pressed him, he still refused. And Naaman said : As thou wilt ; but I beseech thee, grant to me thy servant, to take from hence two mules burden of earth : for thy servant will not henceforth offer holocaust, or victim to other gods, but to the Lord. But there is only this, for which thou shalt entreat the Lord for thy servant ; when my master goeth into the temple of Remmon, to worship, and he leaneth upon my hand, if I bow down in the temple of Remmon, when he boweth down in the same place, that the Lord pardon me thy servant for this thing. And he said to him : Go in peace. Not that we are to understand that the prophet permitted Naaman to offer idolatrous worship to the false god of his master, nor to perform any act which might even seem to be such. What he permitted was merely that public attendance upon the king, as his king, which was exacted from him because of the office he held. When the king leaned on Naaman's arm, and bowed himself before the idol, the posture in which he stood might compel him to bow also, in order to support his master from falling. And this it was which Eliseus permitted, knowing, doubtless, that as Naaman would be known to be a worshipper of the true God, no scandal would be caused, and his conduct would be understood in its true light.

As soon as the devout and faithful Naaman was gone, about to witness for the true faith in the midst of the heathen, the prophet's own house displayed an awful instance of the sin which can be found in the closest proximity to the greatest of God's saints. Giezi, the servant of Eliseus, said to himself : My master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving of him that

which he brought: as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take something of him. And Giezi followed after Naaman: and when he saw him running after him, he leapt down from his chariot to meet him, and said: Is all well? And he said: Well: my master hath sent me to thee, saying: Just now there are come to me from mount Ephraim, two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. And Naaman said: It is better that thou take two talents. And he forced him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, and two changes of garments; and laid them upon two of his servants: and they carried them before him. And when he was come, and now it was the evening, he took them from their hands, and laid them up in the house, and sent the men away; and they departed. But he went in, and stood before his master. And Eliseus said: Whence comest thou, Giezi? He answered: Thy servant went no whither. But he said: Was not my heart present, when the man turned back from his chariot to meet thee? So now thou hast received money, and received garments, to buy oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants. But the leprosy of Naaman shall also stick to thee, and to thy seed for ever. And he went out from him a leper as white as snow.

CHAP. XXV. The Miracles of Eliseus at Samaria.

THE next miracle related of Eliseus was worked for a person who was hewing timber, and let his axe-head fall into the water. The man cried out to Eliseus, bemoaning his loss, because the axe was borrowed. And the man of God cast a piece of wood into the water where the iron had fallen in, and in a moment the axe-head swam on the surface.

After this there was war again between the Syrians and the people of Israel; and the king of Syria, hearing that his stratagems were known to Eliseus, and that he revealed them to the king of Israel, sent a band of men

to seize the prophet. They came, and by night, and surrounded the city where Eliseus was living, and his servant, struck with terror, called to his master to know what to do. At the prophet's prayer, God then miraculously opened the servant's eyes, and he saw the angels of God, like horses and chariots of fire, filling the neighbouring mountain, to protect the man of God against his foes. Then Eliseus prayed again, and God smote the Syrian troops with blindness; so that when the prophet went to meet them they knew him not, and suffered themselves to be led by him into the very midst of the city of Samaria. There God opened their eyes, and they found themselves in the midst of their enemies. The prophet, however, would not suffer them to be ill-used, but induced the king of Israel to entertain them hospitably, and dismissed them in peace.

At a later period the Syrians besieged Samaria, and reduced it to such a terrible famine that a woman was driven to kill and eat her own child. The king of Israel was now filled with rage against Eliseus, believing that it was because he refused to exercise his power with God that the Israelites were thus beaten by their foes. He therefore sent a messenger to murder the prophet in his own house. But Eliseus met the king, and foretold to him that on the very next day the city should be supplied with an over-abundance of food. At this one of the nobles about the king derided the prophecy as an impossibility; and Eliseus replied that for his unbelief he should see the plenty that would pour upon the people, but should never taste of it. That night the Lord caused a supernatural noise, as of a numerous army advancing, to sound throughout the camp of the Syrians, who fled affrighted, and left their tents as they were, with all their possessions and provisions. The next morning four lepers wandering from the city, outcasts from their fellow-creatures, came into the Syrian camp, thinking the death they there might meet no worse than the misery they left behind them. Finding the tents deserted, they returned into Samaria, and brought the wonderful tidings. At first the Israel-

ites accounted the desertion of the camp a snare of their enemies; but at length they found they were really fled, and according to the prophecy of Eliseus, before night the city overflowed with every species of wealth and food. And the king appointed that very nobleman who had derided the prophecy to take charge of the city-gate; and the throng of people was so great that they pressed upon him, and trod him under foot, and he died, crushed beneath the multitude, never tasting the plenty which he beheld before him.

CHAP. XXVI. The Death of Joram and Jezabel.

AFTER these events a seven years' famine came upon the land of Israel; and when they were passed Eliseus foretold that Benadad, the Syrian monarch, would be murdered by his servant Hazael, who would seize the vacant throne; and he sent a messenger to anoint Jehu successor to Joram the king of Israel. And the young man, following the prophet's directions, went to Ramoth-Galaad, where Jehu was conferring with the chief officers of the army; and entering the assembly, he said: I have a word to thee, O prince. And Jehu said: Unto whom of us all? And he said: To thee, O prince. And he arose, and went into the chamber: and he poured the oil upon his head, and said: Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: I have anointed thee king over Israel, the people of the Lord. And thou shalt cut off the house of Achab thy master: and I will revenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord at the hand of Jezabel. And the dogs shall eat Jezabel in the field of Jezrahel: and there shall be no one to bury her. And he opened the door, and fled. Then Jehu went forth to the servants of his lord: and they said to him: Are all things well? why came this madman to thee? And he said to them: You know the man, and what he said. But they answered: It is false; but rather do thou tell us. And he said to them: Thus and thus did he speak to me:

and he said: Thus saith the Lord: I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then they made haste, and taking every man his garment, laid it under his feet, after the manner of a judgment-seat: and they sounded the trumpet, and said: Jehu is king. So Jehu the son of Josaphat the son of Namsi conspired against Joram. Now Joram had besieged Ramoth-Galaad, he and all Israel fighting with Hazael king of Syria: and was returned to be healed in Jezrahel of his wounds; for the Syrians had wounded him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. And Jehu said: If it please you, let no man go forth or flee out of the city; lest he go, and tell in Jezrahel. And he got up, and went into Jezrahel: for Joram was sick there; and Ochozias king of Juda was come down to visit Joram. The watchman, therefore, that stood upon the tower of Jezrahel, saw the troop of Jehu coming, and said: I see a troop. And Joram said: Take a chariot, and send to meet them; and let him that goeth say: Is all well? So there went one in a chariot to meet him, and said: Thus saith the king: Are all things peaceable? And Jehu said: What hast thou to do with peace? go behind, and follow me. And the watchman told, saying: The messenger came to them; but he returneth not. And he sent a second chariot of horses: and he came to them, and said: Thus saith the king: Is there peace? And Jehu said: What hast thou to do with peace? pass, and follow me. And the watchman told, saying: He came even to them, but returneth not: and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Namsi; for he drives furiously. And Joram said: Make ready the chariot. And they made ready his chariot: and Joram king of Israel, and Ochozias king of Juda went out, each in his chariot: and they went out to meet Jehu, and met him in the field of Naboth the Jezrahelite. And when Joram saw Jehu, he said: Is there peace, Jehu? And he answered. What peace? so long as the fornications of Jezabel thy mother, and her many sorceries are in their vigour. And Joram turned his hand, and fleeing, said to Ochozias: There is treachery, Ochozias. But Jehu

bent his bow with his hand, and shot Joram between the shoulders : and the arrow went out through his heart : and immediately he fell in his chariot. And Jehu said to Badacer his captain : Take him, and cast him into the field of Naboth the Jezrahelite : for I remember, when I and thou sitting in a chariot followed Achab this man's father, that the Lord laid this burden upon him, saying : If I do not requite thee in this field, saith the Lord, for the blood of Naboth, and for the blood of his children, which I saw yesterday, saith the Lord. So now take him, and cast him into the field, according to the word of the Lord. But Ochozias king of Juda seeing this, fled by the way of the garden-house : and Jehu pursued him, and said : Strike him also in his chariot. And they struck him in the going up to Gaver, which is by Jeblaam : and he fled into Mageddo, and died there.

And Jehu came into Jezrahel. And Jezabel, hearing of his approach, decked herself with her ornaments, and painted her face, and looked out of a window to welcome him with pretended joy, at the same time warning him of the common fate of those who slew their sovereigns. But heeding her not, he called aloud to ask who was with her in the room. And two or three servants looked out, and he said to them : Throw her down headlong ; and they threw her down ; and the wall was sprinkled with her blood ; and the hoofs of the horses trod upon her. And when he was come in, to eat and to drink, he said : Go, and see after that cursed woman, and bury her : because she is a king's daughter. And when they went to bury her, they found nothing but the skull and the feet, and the extremities of her hands. And coming back they told him. And Jehu said : It is the word of the Lord, which He spoke by his servant Elias the Thesbite, saying : In the field of Jezrahel, the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezabel : and the flesh of Jezabel shall be as dung upon the face of the earth in the field of Jezrahel ; so that they who pass by shall say : Is this that same Jezabel ?

Having thus executed the Divine vengeance on this

wretched woman, Jehu proceeded with the remainder of his terrible duty. He took measures for having the whole posterity of Achab, amounting to seventy persons, put to death; and he then abolished the worship of Baal, craftily proclaiming a festival in order of the idol-god, and slaying every creature who presented himself. Still, Jehu's whole heart was not with God, though he obeyed Him so far as it suited his own personal and ambitious designs. He followed the idolatries of Jeroboam, and left the golden calves standing in Bethel and Dan; and his sins and those of the people drew down the wrath of the Almighty; and the whole country of Israel was long harassed by the attacks of the Syrians.

CHAP. XXVII. Athalia and Joiada. The Death of Eliseus.

As soon as Ochozias was dead, his mother, Athalia, seized his throne, and murdered all her son's posterity, save one, an infant, Joas by name, who was hidden by his aunt Josaba. For six years the bloody queen reigned undisturbed; but in the seventh year the high-priest Joiada brought forth the young Joas from his concealment, and presented him to the people, and crowned him king, and the whole people joyfully recognising his claim, Athalia was slain. So long as Joiada lived, the young monarch lived in a decent observance of his duty to God; but when the aged priest was gathered to his fathers, Joas betook himself to idolatries and vice, till Zacharias, who was now high-priest in the place of his father, rebuked him for his sins. Wild with anger, the king sent, and had the holy man stoned to death, and plunged into renewed iniquities, till the patience of God was tried to the uttermost, and Joas was murdered in his bed by two of his own household.

Before he died, on one occasion he shewed that he still revered the divine gifts of the prophet Eliseus, though he would not turn from his own idols. The prophet was on his dying bed, and the king came to visit him, and wept before him, and said: O my father,

my father, the chariot of Israel and the guider thereof. And Eliseus said to him : Bring a bow and arrows. And when he had brought him a bow and arrows, he said to the king of Israel : Put thy hand upon the bow. And when he had put his hand, Eliseus put his hands over the king's hands, and said : Open the window to the east. And when he had opened it, Eliseus said : Shoot an arrow. And he shot. And Eliseus said : The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of the deliverance from Syria : and thou shalt strike the Syrians in Aphec, till thou consume them. And he said : Take the arrows. And when he had taken them, he said to him : Strike with an arrow upon the ground. And he struck three times, and stood still. And the man of God was angry with him, and said : If thou hadst smitten five or six or seven times, thou hadst smitten Syria even to utter destruction : but now three times shalt thou smite it. And Eliseus died : and they buried him.

Within a short time after the prophet's death, a miracle was wrought with his relics. A party of persons were burying a dead man near where the body of Eliseus lay in its tomb. Suddenly a roving band of Moabites came upon them, and in their terror they cast the corpse into the grave of the prophet and fled. The moment, however, the dead body touched the bones of Eliseus, life returned to it, and the man stood alive upon his feet. Such as the prophet was in his lifetime, such was he, by the power of God, even after his death.

CHAP. XXVIII. The Destruction of the Ten Tribes.
The Prophet Jonas.

NINE monarchs after Jehu succeeded one another in rapid succession, through blood and violence, on the throne of Israel. In the reign of Osee, the last of them, the measure of national guilt was full, and the ten tribes were carried captive into Assyria by the Assyrian king Salmanasar. From that captivity, as a nation they never entirely returned. A partial restoration took place

in after-times ; but as a people, the ten tribes were lost amidst the heathen, and to this day it is a source of curious speculation to discover what was their final end, and whether any traces of them can yet be found existing.

During the reign of one of their latest kings in Samaria, Jeroboam, the second of that name, lived the prophet Jonas, who was the only one of the prophets of the true God who was sent to preach to the heathens. He lived in a town of Galilee ; and the word of the Lord came to him, saying : Arise, and go to Ninive, the great city, and preach in it : for the wickedness thereof is come up before me. And Jonas rose up to flee into Tharsis from the face of the Lord : and he went down to Joppe, and found a ship going to Tharsis : and he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them to Tharsis from the face of the Lord. But the Lord sent a great wind into the sea : and a great tempest was raised in the sea ; and the ship was in danger to be broken. And the mariners were afraid ; and the men cried to their god : and they cast forth the wares that were in the ship, into the sea, to lighten it of them : and Jonas went down into the inner part of the ship, and fell into a deep sleep. And the ship-master came to him, and said to him : Why art thou fast asleep ? rise up, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think of us, that we may not perish. And they said every one to his fellow : Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know why this evil is upon us. And they cast lots ; and the lot fell upon Jonas. And they said to him : Tell us for what cause this evil is upon us ? what is thy business ? of what country art thou ? and whither goest thou ? or of what people art thou ? And he said to them : I am a Hebrew : and I fear the Lord the God of heaven, who made both the sea and the dry land. And the men were greatly afraid : and they said to him : Why hast thou done this ? (for the men knew that he had fled from the face of the Lord ; because he had told them.) And they said to him : What shall we do to thee, that the sea may be calm to us ? for the sea flowed

and swelled. And he said to them : Take me up, and cast me into the sea : and the sea shall be calm to you : for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. And the men rowed hard to return to land : but they were not able ; because the sea tossed, and swelled upon them. And they cried to the Lord, and said : We beseech Thee, O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life ; and lay not upon us innocent blood : for Thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased Thee. And they took Jonas, and cast him into the sea : and the sea ceased from raging. And the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and sacrificed victims to the Lord, and made vows. Now the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonas : and Jonas was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. And Jonas prayed to the Lord his God out of the belly of the fish. And he said : I cried out of my affliction to the Lord ; and He heard me : I cried out of the belly of hell ; and Thou hast heard my voice. And Thou hast cast me forth into the deep in the heart of the sea ; and a flood hath compassed me : all Thy billows and Thy waves have passed over me. And I said : I am cast away out of the sight of Thy eyes : but yet I shall see Thy holy temple again. The waters compassed me about even to the soul : the deep hath closed me round about : the sea hath covered my head. I went down to the lowest parts of the mountains : the bars of the earth have shut me up for ever : and Thou wilt bring up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul was in distress within me, I remembered the Lord : that my prayer may come to Thee, unto Thy holy temple. They that in vain observe vanities, forsake their own mercy. But I with the voice of praise will sacrifice to Thee : I will pay whatsoever I have vowed for my salvation to the Lord. And the Lord spoke to the fish : and it vomited out Jonas upon the dry land.

And the word of the Lord came to Jonas the second time, saying : Arise, and go to Ninive, the great city : and preach in it the preaching that I bid thee. And Jonas arose, and went to Ninive according to the word

of the Lord : now Ninive was a great city of three days' journey. And Jonas began to enter into the city one day's journey : and he cried, and said : Yet forty days, and Ninive shall be destroyed. And the men of Ninive believed in God : and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least. And the word came to the king of Nineve : and he rose up out of his throne, and cast away his robe from him, and was clothed with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published in Ninive from the mouth of the king and of his princes, saying : Let neither men nor beasts, oxen nor sheep, taste any thing : let them not feed nor drink water. And let men and beasts be covered with sackcloth, and cry to the Lord with all their strength : and let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the iniquity that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn, and forgive ; and will turn away from His fierce anger, and we shall not perish ? And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way : and God had mercy with regard to the evil which He had said that He would do to them : and He did it not. And Jonas was exceedingly troubled, and was angry. And he prayed to the Lord, and said : I beseech Thee, O Lord, is not this what I said, when I was yet in my own country ? therefore I went before to flee into Tharsis : for I know that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient, and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil. And now, O Lord, I beseech Thee take my life from me : for it is better for me to die than to live. And the Lord said : Dost thou think thou hast reason to be angry ? Then Jonas went out of the city, and sat toward the east side of the city : and he made himself a booth there : and he sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would befall the city. And the Lord God prepared an ivy, and it came up over the head of Jonas, to be a shadow over his head, and to cover him (for he was fatigued) : and Jonas was exceeding glad of the ivy. But God prepared a worm, when the morning arose on the following day : and it struck the ivy ; and it withered. And

when the sun was risen, the Lord commanded a hot and burning wind : and the sun beat upon the head of Jonas ; and he broiled with the heat : and he desired for his soul that he might die, and said : It is better for me to die than to live. And the Lord said to Jonas : Dost thou think thou hast reason to be angry, for the ivy ? And he said : I am angry with reason even unto death. And the Lord said : Thou art grieved for the ivy, for which thou hast not laboured, nor made it to grow, which in one night came up, and in one night perished. And shall not I spare Ninive, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons, that know not how to distinguish between their right hand and their left, and many beasts ?

Our Saviour Himself afterwards taught His disciples that this prophet was a figure of Himself. On one occasion, when the Scribes and Pharisees came, in their unbelief, pretending to want only a miraculous proof of His divine mission that they might believe in Him, He said : An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign : but there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. The men of Ninive shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here.

CHAP. XXIX. The Reign of Ezechias.

JOAS the king of Juda was succeeded by his son Amasias, a prince who, like many of the Jewish kings, served God with a half heart, destroying the idols, but yet permitting and encouraging many superstitious practices which led to idolatry, such as the burning incense, and offering sacrifices in groves and on hills. As was usual with such unwilling servants of the Most High, his life grew worse as he grew older ; and he was de-

feated in war by the reigning king of Israel, who attacked Jerusalem itself, and plundered the temple of its sacred vessels. At length, Amasias was slain in a conspiracy of his own subjects. His son Azarias followed him on the throne, and walked in his father's steps. For a while he pleased God by his obedience; but at length he presumed to arrogate to himself the office of the priests, and offered incense, in spite of the resistance of the high-priest. His presumption was instantly punished by Almighty God; the leprosy broke out upon his head as he stood before the altar; he was thrown forth as an outcast, and his son Joatham assumed the royal power. For sixteen years Joatham reigned piously and prosperously, when the kingdom was again plunged into misery through the iniquities of his son and successor Achaz. No sovereign of Juda fell away from the service of God more signally than he. He shut up the temple, destroyed portions of its consecrated furniture, set up idols, and adopted the bloody rites of the Gentiles; until the Lord gave up his kingdom to be harassed and conquered by the Assyrian monarch, who stripped the temple of its treasures, seized a portion of the Jewish territory, and carried away its inhabitants into captivity. Still Achaz was unmoved, and sought the help of his idols, instead of turning to the Almighty God, until death carried him away, when still young in years.

His son Ezechias followed him, and instantly set about a purification of his kingdom from the abominations which overspread it. He destroyed the high places, where the people burnt incense to idols, broke the images in pieces, cut down the groves, and even spared not the brazen serpent which Moses had made in the wilderness, and which was a figure of Jesus Christ upon the cross, because it had become an object of idolatrous worship to the besotted people. Turning thus with all his heart to God, he was confident in the Divine protection, and at once refused to pay the tribute which the Assyrian king had exacted from his father. It was now but six years before the time when the kindred

kingdom of Israel was to be carried into bondage by the Assyrians; and Ezechias found his own people groaning under the tyranny of the same race of idolaters. Nevertheless, he resolved to cast off the yoke of the conquerors, and in the end restored the kingdom of Juda to prosperity.

The prophet Isaías was the counsellor of Ezechias, and under his direction the king defied all the powers of Sennacherib, the Assyrian monarch. The prophet himself has recorded the history of the impiety and defeat of the Assyrian general; and no other passage of Holy Writ more strikingly describes the madness and impotence of man when he sets himself up against the will of the Almighty. Sennacherib sent a large force to attack Jerusalem, under Rabshaces, his general. And Ezechias sent messengers to meet and confer with him; but Rabshaces replied with insults, and a defiance of the power of God. And coming near the wall of the city, he cried out to the multitude of people who were on the wall, and sought to tempt them to disbelieve the power of the Lord to deliver them from his hands. Let not Ezechias, he said, deceive you; for he shall not be able to deliver you. And let not Ezechias make you trust in the Lord, saying: The Lord will surely deliver us; and this city shall not be given into the hands of the king of the Assyrians. Do not hearken to Ezechias; for thus said the king of the Assyrians: Do with me that which is for your advantage; and come out to me, and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig-tree; and drink ye every one the water of his cistern, till I come and take you away to a land like to your own, a land of corn and of wine, a land of bread and vineyards. Neither let Ezechias trouble you, saying: The Lord will deliver us. Have any of the gods of the nations delivered their land out of the hand of the king of the Assyrians? Where is the God of Emath, and of Arphad? where is the God of Sepharvaim? have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who is there among all the gods of these lands, that hath delivered his country out of my hand, that the Lord may deliver

Jerusalem out of my hand? And they held their peace, and answered him not a word. For the king had commanded, saying: Answer him not. And Eliacim the son of Helcias, that was over the house, and Sobna the scribe, and Joahe the son of Asaph the recorder, went in to Ezechias with their garments rent, and told him the words of Rabsaces.

CHAP. XXX. The Destruction of the Assyrians.

AND when Ezechias was told the words of the Assyrian general, he rent his garments, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went in to the house of the Lord. And he sent Eliacim, who was over the house, and Sobna the scribe, and the ancients of the priests covered with sackcloth, to Isaias the son of Amos the prophet. And they said to him: Thus saith Ezechias: This day is a day of tribulation, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy; for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabsaces, whom the king of the Assyrians his master hath sent to blaspheme the living God, and to reproach with words which the Lord thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left. And the servants of Ezechias came to Isaias. And Isaias said to them: Thus shall you say to your master: Thus saith the Lord: Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of the Assyrians have blasphemed Me. Behold, I will send a spirit upon him; and he shall hear a message, and shall return to his own country: and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own country. And Rabsaces returned, and found the king of the Assyrians besieging Lobna, for he had heard that he was departed from Lachis. And he heard say about Tharaca the king of Ethiopia: He is come forth to fight against thee. And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Ezechias, saying: Thus shall you speak to Ezechias the king of Juda, saying: Let not thy God deceive thee, in

whom thou trustest, saying : Jerusalem shall not be given into the hands of the king of the Assyrians. Behold, thou hast heard all that the kings of the Assyrians have done to all countries which they have destroyed ; and canst thou be delivered ? Have the gods of the nations delivered them whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozam, and Haram, and Reseph, and the children of Eden, that were in Thalassar ? Where is the king of Emath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Ana, and of Ava ? And Ezechias took the letter from the hands of the messengers, and read it, and went up to the house of the Lord : and Ezechias spread it before the Lord. And Ezechias prayed to the Lord, saying : O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, who sittest upon the cherubim ; Thou alone art the God of all the kingdoms of the earth ; Thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline, O Lord, Thy ear, and hear : open, O Lord, Thy eyes, and see, and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he hath sent to blaspheme the living God. For of a truth, O Lord, the kings of the Assyrians have laid waste lands, and their countries. And they have cast their gods into the fire ; for they were not gods, but the works of men's hands, of wood and stone : and they broke them in pieces. And now, O Lord our God, save us out of his hand : and let all the kingdoms of the earth know, that Thou only art the Lord. And Isaias the son of Amos sent to Ezechias, saying : Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel : For the prayer thou hast made to Me concerning Sennacherib the king of the Assyrians : This is the word which the Lord hath spoken of him : The virgin the daughter of Sion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn : the daughter of Jerusalem hath wagged the head after thee. . Whom hast thou reproached, and whom hast thou blasphemed, and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thy eyes on high ? Against the holy One of Israel. By the hand of thy servants thou hast reproached the Lord ; and hast said : With the multitude of my chariots I have gone up to the height of the mountains, to the top of Libanus : and I will cut down its tall cedars, and its

choice fir-trees, and will enter to the top of its height, to the forest of its Carmel. I have digged, and drunk water, and have dried up with the sole of my foot all the rivers shut up in banks. Hast thou not heard what I have done to him of old? from the days of old I have formed it: and now I have brought it to effect: and it hath come to pass that hills fighting together, and fenced cities should be destroyed. The inhabitants of them were weak of hand; they trembled, and were confounded; they became like the grass of the field, and the herb of the pasture, and like the grass of the house-tops, which withered before it was ripe. I know thy dwelling, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against Me. When thou wast mad against Me, thy pride came up to My ears: therefore I will put a ring in thy nose, and a bit between thy lips: and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. But to thee this shall be a sign: Eat this year the things that spring of themselves; and in the second year eat fruits; but in the third year sow and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. And that which shall be saved of the house of Juda, and which is left, shall take root downward, and shall bear fruit upward: for out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and salvation from mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this. Wherefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of the Assyrians: He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow into it, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a trench about it. By the way that he came, he shall return: and into this city he shall not come, saith the Lord. And I will protect this city, and will save it for My own sake, and for the sake of David My servant. And the angel of the Lord went out, and slew in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand. And they arose in the morning, and behold, they were all dead corpses. And Sennacherib the king of the Assyrians went out, and departed, and returned and dwelt in Ninive. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the temple of Nesroch his god, that Adramelech and Sarasar his sons slew him with the

sword; and they fled into the land of Ararat: and Asarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XXXI. Sickness, Recovery, and Death of Ezechias.

AFTER this Ezechias fell sick with a complaint of which he expected to die; and Isaías came and said to him: Thus saith the Lord God: Give charge concerning thy house; for thou shalt die, and not live. And he turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord, saying: I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is pleasing before Thee. And Ezechias wept with much weeping. And before Isaías was gone out of the middle of the court, the word of the Lord came to him, saying: Go back, and tell Ezechias the captain of my people: Thus saith the Lord the God of David thy father: I have heard thy prayer, and I have seen thy tears: and behold, I have healed thee: on the third day thou shalt go up to the temple of the Lord. And I will add to thy days fifteen years: and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of the Assyrians; and I will protect this city for My own sake and for David My servant's sake. And Isaías said: Bring me a lump of figs. And when they had brought it, and laid it upon his boil, he was healed. And Ezechias had said to Isaías: What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up to the temple of the Lord the third day? And Isaías said to him: This shall be the sign from the Lord, that the Lord will do the word which He hath spoken: Wilt thou that the shadow go forward ten lines, or that it go back so many degrees? And Ezechias said: It is an easy matter for the shadow to go forward ten lines: and I do not desire that this be done: but let it return back ten degrees. And Isaías the prophet called upon the Lord: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backwards by the lines, by which it had already gone down in the dial of Achaz.

And the king was restored to health, and lived

fifteen years after that time. But on his recovery, puffed up with prosperity, he brought upon himself a bitter rebuke from the prophet who had been his unfailing friend and guide. The Babylonian king sent an embassy to congratulate him on his recovery from his sickness, and Ezechias was not satisfied without displaying to them, in the pride of his heart, all the treasures he possessed, as though they were the fruit of his own power and wisdom, and not of the favour of Almighty God. And Isaias came to him, and told him that these very riches which he had gloried in shewing to the idolaters should soon become their prey, and that the day was at hand when all his posterity would be carried into bondage by the very men whose envy he had excited by his foolish vanity.

CHAP. XXXII. The Reign of Manasses. Judith and Holofernes.

WHEN Ezechias died, his son Manasses was but a boy, and he spent his youth in the wildest excesses, sacrificing to Baal and other idols, and shedding the blood of his subjects like water. He was at last carried captive into Babylon, where he repented of his sins; and he was restored to his liberty and his kingdom, over which he reigned in peace and prosperity altogether for fifty-five years.

During his reign the events which are related in the book of Judith are supposed to have taken place. Holofernes, the general of Nabuchodonosor the king of Assyria, invaded the territory of Juda, and laid waste the country wheresoever he came; while the people fled to the mountains and to the fortified places, where they prepared to resist him. Astonished at their courage, which he accounted senseless audacity, the Assyrian soldier inquired of his allies the Ammonites who they were that thus resisted his arms. Achior, the Ammonitish general, replied to him by relating the history of the Jews from the time of their captivity in Egypt, attributed their prosperity and courage to the protection of

the true God, and bade Holofernes beware how he lifted himself up against the Almighty, unless he could first learn that the Jews had provoked God's wrath by their own sins.

Amazed and irritated at what he heard, Holofernes sent Achior from his presence, and delivered him into the hands of the people of Bethulia, a city in Galilee, that when, as he expected, he should take the city, he might slay Achior with the rest of its inhabitants. Then marching against Bethulia, he laid siege to it with a large body of troops, and succeeded in cutting off all its supplies of water, so that the people were reduced to frightful distress.

From amongst their own number a deliverer then appeared. Judith, a widow woman of great beauty, hearing that the commander of the city was about to capitulate, presented herself before the chief persons of the place, and bade them humble themselves before God for their sins, and wait a while, while she executed a plan she had formed for their deliverance. Then, praying for strength and guidance from Almighty God, she attired herself in costly garments, and taking her maid with her, entered the camp of the Assyrians, and presented herself before Holofernes, telling him that she had fled from the city because, for its sins against God, it was about to perish. Holofernes, struck with her beauty, received her honourably, and gave her lodging in a tent with her maid. Four days afterwards, Holofernes sent to beg her to be present at a feast he was giving to his servants. And Judith came; and late at night she was left alone with Holofernes, who had fallen down dead drunk upon his couch. And bidding her maid wait outside the chamber, she went to the bedside, and praying to the Lord, she seized the sword which hung at the bed's head, and smote off the head of the proud captain as he lay before her. And she took the head, and put it into her bag which she had brought, and with her maid returned to the city. And the Bethulians, hearing what was done, sallied forth and attacked the Assyrians, who, terrified at their cap-

tain's death, fled dismayed, and left their spoils to the conquerors.

CHAP. XXXIII. Josias. The last Kings of Juda.

AMON, the godless son of Manasses, succeeded to his father's throne, and, after a two years' reign, was slain by a conspiracy. Josias, his son, a child of eight years old, received the vacant crown, and for thirty-one years served God with all his heart. He destroyed idolatry, and restored the splendour of the temple-worship, which had been so utterly neglected that even the book of the law was forgotten, and its existence scarcely known. The high-priest, also, reading in the book the denunciations of Moses against the Jews if they should fall into idolatry, was struck with terror, and carried the tidings of what he had read to the king. Josias, also terrified, consulted a prophetess, Holda by name, distinguished for the gifts God had given her. And she said to the king's messengers: Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel: Tell the man that sent you to me: Thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will bring evils upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, all the words of the law which the king of Juda hath read: because they have forsaken Me, and have sacrificed to strange gods, provoking Me by all the works of their hands: therefore My indignation shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. But to the king of Juda, who sent you to consult the Lord, thus shall you say: Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel: Forasmuch as thou hast heard the words of the book, and thy heart hath been moved to fear, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, hearing the words against this place, and the inhabitants thereof, to wit, that they should become a wonder and a curse: and thou hast rent thy garments, and wept before Me, I also have heard thee, saith the Lord: therefore I will gather thee to thy fathers: and thou shalt be gathered to thy sepulchre in peace, that thy eyes may not see all the evils which I will bring upon this place.

Thus warned and thus encouraged, Josias proceeded



with the extirpation of all idolatrous rites, and defiled every object of superstitious regard. He died, at the end of a prosperous reign, of a wound in battle, and with him passed away the last glories of the Jewish kingdom. Joachaz, Joakim, Joachin, and Sedechias, succeeded one another in the royal power, and added sin to sin, till the cup of national guilt was full. Joakim received awful warnings of what was at hand from the prophet Jeremias; but he insulted the prophet's messenger, and took the roll on which the judgments of God were written that he might read them, and cut it in pieces, and cast it contemptuously into the flames. He was then carried captive to Babylon by Nabuchodonosor its king, but was afterwards released and made a vassal of the Babylonians. At the end of three years he revolted against his conqueror, and was seized and put to death by the Chaldeans. His son Joachin was next led a captive to Babylon; and Sedechias, a son of Josias, was set up as nominal king of Juda by the victors. For nine years he thus reigned, sinning unrepentingly against God, and at last, rebelling against Nabuchodonosor, he was taken by Nabuchodonosor, his eyes were put out, and he was carried captive with all his people. The walls of Jerusalem were also levelled with the ground, the temple and royal palaces were destroyed, and none left but a few poor husbandmen to till the land.

CHAP. XXXIV. The Prophets before the Captivity.

WHILE the children of Israel were thus, from generation to generation, provoking God's anger, Almighty God Himself had not ceased from time to time to commission His prophets to declare His will to them, and to entreat them to turn from their sins before His wrath fell upon them. Osee had prophesied under Ozias, Joathan, Achaz, and Ezechias, kings of Juda; Amos under Ozias king of Juda; Abdias about the same time; Micheas, who foretold that our Saviour would be born at Bethlehem, under Joathan; Joel, under

Manasses ; and Sophonias, under Josias. Jeremias, who was affectionately served by his disciple, the prophet Baruch, was especially the prophet of the captivity ; and as he had never ceased to warn his countrymen of the judgments coming upon them, so he remained at Jerusalem when all was overwhelmed in ruin, to comfort the miserable remnant that were left. On one occasion, the ungodly courtiers of king Sedechias had prevailed on the weak monarch to suffer them to do what they would with the prophet when he upbraided them with their sins ; and Jeremias would have perished in a filthy dungeon, into which they cast him, but for the intercession of an Ethiopian servant of the king, who delivered him from his peril. And when Sedechias and all his court were carried away to Babylon, the prophet still fulfilled his sacred work ; and while he mourned over the woes of his people, he urged upon the remnant left behind the duty of repentance under the chastising hand of God, bidding them put their trust in the Divine mercy rather than fly to Egypt, as they desired. They heeded him not, however, and fled to the Egyptians, taking with them Jeremias ; and tradition reports that after their arrival in Egypt they murdered him.

Of all these inspired men, none foretold the events of the Christian Church so clearly as the prophet Isaiahs. He predicted many circumstances of the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ with the most minute distinctness, so that he has been called the evangelical prophet.

BOOK V.

THE CAPTIVITY AND THE RESTORATION.

CHAP. I. The History of Tobias.

AT the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, the people of the ten tribes were already scattered in various parts of the land of Assyria, where they dwelt as a despised and captive race, but enjoying some degree of personal liberty. The Scripture records the private history of one of them, who was a model of piety and resignation to the Divine will. Tobias, a man of the tribe of Nephtali, lived at Ninive, but took frequent journeys to other parts in the exercise of acts of benevolence towards his more distressed fellow-countrymen. When the fury of Sennacherib, the Assyrian monarch, was roused afresh against the captive Israelites by the failure of his expedition against Ezechias the king of Juda, Tobias redoubled his efforts to soothe their sufferings, and, at the peril of his own life, was accustomed to bury the dead bodies of those whom the cruelty of the tyrant put to death. For a while he was forced to secrete himself from Sennacherib's vengeance, but on the king's death renewed his works of mercy unmolested.

On one occasion, wearied with his toils, he lay down to sleep beneath a swallow's nest, and the droppings from above falling into his eyes, destroyed his sight. Fresh trouble also befel him from his wife Anna, who reproached him angrily for a warning he one day gave her against stealing, when he supposed that a kid she had received in payment for her work had been dishonestly obtained. At length, weary and sad at heart, he prayed to God for death to end his sufferings. An intimation was sent him from the Almighty by the hands

of the angel Raphael, assuring him that his prayers were heard; and Tobias, supposing that this implied that he was to be relieved by death, called his son Tobias, and admonishing him to be ever charitable and never to yield to the heats of youthful passion, sent him from home to gather in a debt owed him by one Gabelus, at Rages, a city of the Medes. The youth immediately started on his journey with his dog, and seeking a guide, a young man of noble aspect presented himself to him, who was, in truth, none other than the angel Raphael, under the disguise of a person of noble family. With him Tobias returned to his father, and the angel, without revealing himself, promised success to the young man's journey, and recovery of sight to his aged father.

The first night they slept near the river Tigris; and Tobias, washing his feet in the river, was attacked by a monstrous fish, and in his terror he cried aloud to his angelic guide. The angel bade him fear not, but boldly seize the fish, and drag it a-shore. The youth obeyed, and, by the angel's directions, took out the entrails of the fish, which he assured him were of efficacy both as a medicine and against the attacks of evil spirits. Arriving at Rages, the angel told him that he must seek a lodging with his kinsman Raguel, who dwelt there, and must ask his only daughter Sara in marriage. Tobias, terrified, reminded his guide that already the damsel had married seven husbands, every one of whom had been killed by Satanic power the very first night of their marriage. The angel bade him be of good courage, for these sudden deaths had been the punishment of their ungoverned passions; and he promised Tobias that if he would but obey the rules he laid down, and lay the liver of the fish on the fire the day he was married, the devil should have no power to hurt him.

As the angel had foretold, so it came to pass. Raguel, though at first doubting, encouraged by the angel, gave his daughter to Tobias, who joined with his bride in prayer and mortification for the Divine protection; and though Raguel, still afraid, had even prepared a grave for his new son-in-law, expecting his untimely

death, the blessing of God rested on them. Gabelus, also, gratefully paid his debt; and leaving his bride to follow, Tobias, with his angel-guardian, returned to his father's house. There his aged parents welcomed him; and the young man, by the angel's orders, touched his father's eyes with the gall of the fish, and immediately the lost sight was restored. Sara now rejoined her husband; and amidst the rejoicings of the household and their kinsfolk, Tobias and his son entreated the angel to receive the half of all their possessions, in payment for his services. Then, at length, he made himself known, telling them that he was Raphael, one of the seven spirits who stand before the throne of God; and as they fell prostrate on the ground, he disappeared from before their eyes. Tobias the elder then prophesied the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and gave thanks to God for all His mercies. He lived to a great age, and his son returned to Rages, where he lived protected by God and honoured by man.

CHAP. II. The Prophet Ezechiel.

IN the fifth year of the captivity of King Joachin in Babylon, Almighty God gave a commission to one of the captives, Ezechiel, of the priestly race, to announce the Divine will to his fellow-countrymen in their bondage. An awful vision displayed to him, under mysterious images, the majesty and glory of the Lord of hosts. The prophet relates what he beheld in the beginning of the book which contains his predictions, and the message he received from God.

I saw, he says, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north: and a great cloud, and a fire infolding it, and brightness was about it: and out of the midst thereof, that is, out of the midst of the fire, as it were the resemblance of amber: and in the midst thereof the likeness of four living creatures: and this was their appearance: there was the likeness of a man in them. Every one had four faces, and every one four wings. Their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their foot

was like the sole of a calf's foot : and they sparkled like the appearance of glowing brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides : and they had faces and wings on four sides. And the wings of one were joined to the wings of another. They turned not when they went ; but every one went straight forward. And as for the likeness of their faces : there was the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side of all the four ; and the face of an ox, on the left side of all the four ; and the face of an eagle over all the four. And their faces and their wings were stretched upward : two wings of every one were joined, and two covered their bodies : and every one of them went straight forward : whither the impulse of the spirit was to go, thither they went : and they turned not when they went. And as for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like that of burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps. This was the vision running to and fro in the midst of the living creatures, a bright fire, and lightning going forth from the fire. And the living creatures ran and returned like flashes of lightning. Now as I beheld the living creatures, there appeared upon the earth by the living creatures one wheel with four faces. And the appearance of the wheels, and the work of them, was like the appearance of the sea : and the four had all one likeness : and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the midst of a wheel. When they went, they went by their four parts ; and they turned not when they went. The wheels had also a size, and a height, and a dreadful appearance : and the whole body was full of eyes round about all the four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels also went together by them : and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels also were lifted up with them. Whithersoever the spirit went, thither as the spirit went the wheels also were lifted withal, and followed it ; for the spirit of life was in the wheels. When those went, these went ; and when those stood, these stood ; and when those were lifted up from the earth,

the wheels also were lifted up together, and followed them: for the spirit of life was in the wheels. And over the heads of the living creatures was the likeness of the firmament, as the appearance of crystal terrible to behold, and stretched out over their heads above. And under their firmament were their wings straight the one toward the other: every one with two wings covered his body; and the other was covered in like manner. And I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters, as it were the voice of the most high God: when they walked, it was like the voice of a multitude, like the noise of an army; and when they stood, their wings were let down. For when a voice came from above the firmament, that was over their heads, they stood, and let down their wings. And above the firmament, that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of the sapphire-stone: and upon the likeness of the throne, was a likeness as of the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as it were the resemblance of amber, as the appearance of fire within it round about: from his loins and upward, and from his loins downward, I saw as it were the resemblance of fire shining round about. As the appearance of the rainbow when it is in a cloud on a rainy day; this was the appearance of the brightness round about.

This was the vision of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And I saw, and I fell upon my face; and I heard the voice of one that spoke. And he said to me: Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak to thee. And the spirit entered into me after that he spoke to me, and he set me upon my feet: and I heard him speaking to me, and saying: Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious people that hath revolted from me: they and their fathers have transgressed my covenant even unto this day. And they to whom I send thee are children of a hard face, and of an obstinate heart; and thou shalt say to them: Thus saith the Lord God: If so be they at least will hear, and if so be they will forbear, for they are a provoking

house : and they shall know that there hath been a prophet in the midst of them. And thou, O son of man, fear not, neither be thou afraid of their words : for thou art among unbelievers and destroyers, and thou dwellest with scorpions. Fear not their words ; neither be thou dismayed at their looks : for they are a provoking house. And thou shalt speak my words to them, if perhaps they will hear, and forbear ; for they provoke me to anger. But thou, O son of man, hear all that I say to thee : and do not thou provoke me, as that house provoketh me ; open thy mouth, and eat what I give thee. And I looked, and behold, a hand was sent to me, wherein was a book rolled up : and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without : and there were written in it lamentations, and canticles, and woe.

And he said to me : Son of man, eat all that thou shalt find : eat this book, and go speak to the children of Israel. And I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that book : and he said to me : Son of man, thy belly shall eat, and thy bowels shall be filled with this book which I give thee. And I did eat it : and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.

CHAP. II. The Vision of the Dry Bones.

THUS was the prophet commissioned to receive the words of God, and to declare them to the people in their captivity. Taught by the Spirit of the Lord, he warned them of the utter destruction which was coming upon Jerusalem, for as yet Sedechias reigned in Judæa, as a tributary to Babylon ; he promised also their future restoration, the final desolation of their heathen conquerors, and the general mercy of God towards all penitent sinners, with the vengeance He would execute on the obstinately guilty.

Many visions were vouchsafed him by God, symbolically representing the dealings of the Almighty with His people, and foreshadowing not only the restoration

of the Jews, but the glories of the Christian Church. One of these foretold both the blessings to come upon the conquered captives, and the final resurrection of the bodies of all mankind. The hand of the Lord, the prophet says, was upon me, and brought me forth in the spirit of the Lord: and set me down in the midst of a plain that was full of bones. And He led me about through them on every side: now they were very many upon the face of the plain; and they were exceeding dry. And He said to me: Son of man, dost thou think these bones shall live? And I answered: O Lord God, Thou knowest. And He said to me: Prophecy concerning these bones; and say to them: Ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will send spirit into you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to grow over you, and will cover you with skin: and I will give you spirit; and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord. And I prophesied as He had commanded me: and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold, a commotion; and the bones came together, each one to its joint. And I saw, and behold, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them: and the skin was stretched out over them; but there was no spirit in them. And he said to me: Prophecy to the spirit, prophecy, O son of man, and say to the spirit: Thus saith the Lord God: Come, spirit, from the four winds, and blow upon these slain; and let them live again. And I prophesied as He had commanded me: and the spirit came into them, and they lived: and they stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. And He said to me: Son of man: all these bones are the house of Israel: they say: Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost, and we are cut off. Therefore prophecy, and say to them: Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves, and will bring you out of your sepulchres, O my people: and will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall have opened your sepulchres, and shall have brought you out of your graves, O my

people: and shall have put my spirit in you, and you shall live; and I shall make you rest upon your own land: and you shall know that I the Lord have spoken, and done it, saith the Lord God.

CHAP. III. The Prophet Daniel.

AMONG the captives brought to Babylon by Nabuchodonosor was a youth of royal blood, Daniel by name, distinguished as much for his piety as for his great talents and handsome countenance. By orders of the Chaldean monarch, he, with three of his companions, Ananias, Misael, and Azarias, or as they were surnamed by the Babylonians, Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, were summoned to the king's palace for the purpose of being instructed in the language and learning of Chaldea. Fearing that if they eat the luxuries of the king's table they should eat what was forbidden by the law of Moses, Daniel and his companions entreated the officer who had charge of them to allow them to live upon pulse and water; and after an experiment to discover whether they would retain their health on such diet, the request was granted; and after three years the four young Hebrews were taken into the king's presence, and counted among his wisest subjects.

In the second year of Nabuchodonosor's reign as sole sovereign of Babylon, after his father's death, a dream terrified the king so that he could not rest without discovering its interpretation, though the dream itself had passed in its particulars from his memory. He summoned his magicians and diviners, and bade them discover both the dream and its interpretation; and when they could give him no satisfaction, in his fury he put them all to death. Daniel and his companions were involved in the sentence, though the king had not consulted them; and they cried to God to reveal the mystery to them, that their lives might be spared. Then was the mystery revealed to Daniel by a vision in the night; and Daniel blessed the God of:

heaven, and speaking, he said : Blessed be the name of the Lord from eternity, and for evermore : for wisdom and fortitude are His. And He changeth times and ages ; taketh away kingdoms and establisheth them ; giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that have understanding : He revealeth deep and hidden things, and knoweth what is in darkness ; and light is with Him. To Thee, O God of our fathers, I give thanks, and I praise Thee : because Thou hast given me wisdom and strength : and now Thou hast shewn me what we desired of Thee, for Thou hast made known to us the king's discourse. After this Daniel went in to Arioch, to whom the king had given orders to destroy the wise men of Babylon ; and he spoke thus to him : Destroy not the wise men of Babylon : bring me in before the king, and I will tell the solution to the king. Then Arioch in haste brought in Daniel to the king, and said to him : I have found a man of the children of the captivity of Juda, that will resolve the question to the king. The king answered, and said to Daniel, whose name was Baltassar : Thinkest thou indeed that thou canst tell me the dream that I saw, and the interpretation thereof ? And Daniel made answer before the king, and said : The secret that the king desireth to know, none of the wise men, or the philosophers, or the diviners, or the soothsayers, can declare to the king ; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth mysteries, who hath shewn to thee, O King Nabuchodonosor, what is to come to pass in the latter times. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these. Thou, O king, didst begin to think in thy bed what should come to pass hereafter : and He that revealeth mysteries shewed thee what shall come to pass. To me also this secret is revealed, not by any wisdom that I have more than all men alive ; but that the interpretation might be made manifest to the king, and thou mightest know the thoughts of thy mind. Thou, O king, sawest, and behold, there was as it were a great statue : this statue, which was great and high, tall of stature, stood before thee : and the look thereof was terrible. The head of

this statue was of fine gold ; but the breast and the arms of silver ; and the belly and the thighs of brass ; and the legs of iron ; the feet part of iron, and part of clay. Thus thou sawest till a stone was cut out of a mountain without hands : and it struck the statue upon the feet thereof, that were of iron and of clay, and broke them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of a summer's threshing floor : and they were carried away by the wind, and there was no place found for them : but the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream : we will also tell the interpretation thereof before thee, O king. Thou art a king of kings ; and the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, and strength, and power, and glory : and all places wherein the children of men, and the beasts of the field do dwell : He hath also given the birds of the air into thy hand, and hath put all things under thy power : thou therefore art the head of gold. And after thee shall rise up another kingdom, inferior to thee, of silver : and another third kingdom, of brass, which shall rule over all the world. And the fourth kingdom shall be as iron. As iron breaketh into pieces, and subdueth all things, so shall that break and destroy all these. And whereas thou sawest the feet and the toes part of potter's clay, and part of iron ; the kingdom shall be divided, but yet it shall take its origin from the iron, according as thou sawest the iron mixed with the miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall be mingled indeed together with the seed of man ; but they shall not stick fast one to another ; as iron cannot be mixed with clay. But in the days of those kingdoms the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed : and His kingdom shall not be delivered up to another people : and it shall break in pieces, and it shall consume all these kingdoms : and

itself shall stand for ever. According as thou sawest, that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and broke in pieces the clay and the iron, and the brass, and the silver, and the gold, the great God hath shewn the king what shall come to pass hereafter : and the dream is true, and the interpretation thereof is faithful. Then King Nabuchodonosor fell on his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer in sacrifice to him victims and incense. And the king spoke to Daniel, and said : Verily, your God is the God of gods, and Lord of kings, and a revealer of hidden things ; seeing thou couldst discover this secret. Then the king advanced Daniel to a high station, and gave him many and great gifts : and he made him governor over all the provinces of Babylon, and chief of the magistrates over all the wise men of Babylon. And Daniel requested of the king, and he appointed Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago over the works of the province of Babylon : but Daniel himself was in the king's palace.

CHAP IV. Daniel's Three Friends thrown into the Fiery Furnace.

AFTER this, King Nabuchodonosor made a statue of gold, of sixty cubits high, and six cubits broad : and he set it up in the plain of Dura, of the province of Babylon. Then Nabuchodonosor the king sent to call together the nobles, the magistrates, and the judges, the captains, the rulers, and governors and all the chief men of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the statue which King Nabuchodonosor had set up. Then the nobles, the magistrates, and the judges, the captains, and rulers, and the great men that were placed in authority, and all the princes of the provinces, were gathered together to come to the dedication of the statue, which King Nabuchodonosor had set up. And they stood before the statue which King Nabuchodonosor had set up. Then a herald cried with a strong voice : To you it is commanded, O nations, tribes, and languages : that in the

hour that you shall hear the sound of the trumpet, and of the flute, and of the harp, of the sackbut, and of the psaltery, and of the symphony, and of all kinds of music, ye fall down and adore the golden statue which King Nabuchodonosor hath set up. But if any man shall not fall down and adore, he shall the same hour be cast into a furnace of burning fire. Upon this, therefore, at the time when all the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the flute, and the harp, of the sackbut, and the psaltery, of the symphony, and of all kind of music, all the nations, tribes, and languages fell down and adored the golden statue which King Nabuchodonosor had set up. And presently at that very time some Chaldeans came, and accused the Jews. And said to King Nabuchodonosor: O king, live for ever: thou, O king, hast made a decree that every man that shall hear the sound of the trumpet, the flute, and the harp, of the sackbut, and the psaltery, of the symphony, and of all kind of music, shall prostrate himself, and adore the golden statue: and that if any man shall not fall down and adore, he should be cast into a furnace of burning fire. Now there are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the works of the province of Babylon, Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago: these men, O king, have slighted thy decree: they worship not thy gods; nor do they adore the golden statue which thou hast set up. Then Nabuchodonosor in fury, and in wrath, commanded that Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago should be brought; who immediately were brought before the king. And Nabuchodonosor the king spoke to them, and said: Is it true, O Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, that you do not worship my gods, nor adore the golden statue that I have set up? Now therefore if you be ready, at what hour soever you shall hear the sound of the trumpet, flute, harp, sackbut and psaltery, and symphony, and of all kind of music, prostrate yourselves, and adore the statue which I have made: but if you do not adore, you shall be cast the same hour into the furnace of burning fire: and who is the God that shall deliver you out of my hand? Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago answered, and said to

King Nabuchodonosor : We have no occasion to answer thee concerning this matter. For behold, our God, whom we worship, is able to save us from the furnace of burning fire, and to deliver us out of thy hands, O king. But if He will not, be it known to thee, O king, that we will not worship thy gods, nor adore the golden statue which thou hast set up. Then was Nabuchodonosor filled with fury ; and the countenance of his face was changed against Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago ; and he commanded that the furnace should be heated seven times more than it had been accustomed to be heated. And he commanded the strongest men that were in his army to bind the feet of Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, and to cast them into the furnace of burning fire. And immediately these men were bound, and were cast into the furnace of burning fire, with their coats, and their caps, and their shoes, and their garments. For the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace was heated exceedingly. And the flame of the fire slew those men that had cast in Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago. But these three men, that is, Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, fell down bound in the midst of the furnace of burning fire. And they walked in the midst of the flame, praising God, and blessing the Lord.

Then the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and said to his nobles : Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire ? They answered the king, and said : True, O king. He answered, and said : Behold, I see four men loose, and walking in the midst of the fire : and there is no hurt in them, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nabuchodonosor came to the door of the burning fiery furnace, and said : Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, ye servants of the most high God, go ye forth, and come. And immediately Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago went out from the midst of the fire. And the nobles, and the magistrates, and the judges, and the great men of the king being gathered together, considered these men, that the fire had no power on their bodies, and that not

a hair of their head had been singed, nor their garments altered, nor the smell of the fire had passed on them. Then Nabuchodonosor breaking forth, said: Blessed be the God of them, to wit, of Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that believed in Him: and they changed the king's word, and delivered up their bodies, that they might not serve, nor adore any God, except their own God. By me, therefore, this decree is made, that every people, tribe, and tongue, which shall speak blasphemy against the God of Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, shall be destroyed, and their houses laid waste: for there is no other God that can save in this manner. Then the king promoted Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago in the province of Babylon.

CHAP. V. Nabuchodonosor's Punishment and Restoration.
Bel and the Dragon.

AGAIN another dream terrified the Babylonian king, and he called Daniel to interpret its signification. He beheld a tree, flourishing and full of fruit, and a voice from heaven commanded that it should be cut down, and that the stump should be bound with iron and brass, while it was spoken of as if it were a human being; and the voice said, Let his heart be changed from a man's, and let a beast's heart be given him, and let seven times pass over him. This, the prophet told the monarch, was an emblem of his own coming punishment. For his haughtiness and godlessness, he was to be stricken with insanity, and, as it were, changed from a man into a beast; and for seven years he was to live the life of a savage in the fields, eating grass and roots, until he should repent of his sins, when the mercy of God would restore him to his senses and to his throne. For a whole year, however, the threatened chastisement was delayed, but the king's heart was not moved. At the end of twelve months, therefore, the hand of God smote him, and all that Daniel had foretold befell him until he repented, when he was lifted up again to his former

state, and he glorified God for all that He had done to him.

On his death, Evilmerodach his son succeeded him, and Daniel continued his zeal for the service of the true God amidst the idolaters with whom he lived. Twice, supported by the king's favour, he succeeded in exposing the impostures of the priests of the idols. The chief object of the worship of the Babylonians was an idol called Bel; and the priests pretended that the image itself ate and drank the offerings of flour, sheep, and wine which the people brought to the temple. The flour, sheep, and wine did indeed seem to disappear before the image, but it was by the hands of the priests themselves, who came by night through a secret passage, and carried off the offerings left in the temple.

Daniel, having obtained leave of the king, detected the fraud by secretly spreading ashes upon the floor of the temple, so that in the morning the footprints of the priests and their families, who had come as usual to eat and drink, betrayed them, and shewed the way to their hidden entrance. So soon as the trick was discovered, the king put them all to death, and gave permission to Daniel to destroy the idol and its temple.

After the image of Bel was destroyed, the superstition of the people led them to pay divine honours to a large serpent or dragon, until Daniel made a mixture of pitch, fat, and hair, and thrust it into the mouth of the serpent, which swallowed them, and afterwards burst asunder with its effect.

CHAP. VI. The Handwriting upon the Wall. Daniel in the Lions' Den. Susanna and the Elders.

THE last of the Babylonian kings of the family of Nabuchodonosor was Baltassar, his grandson, a prince whose insolent pride brought down the vengeance of God upon his house. He made a magnificent feast for his nobles, and when heated with wine, he sent for the sacred vessels of the temple which had been brought from Jerusalem, and drank wine in them with all his

guests. And as they drank and sung praises to their idol-gods, there appeared the hand of a man writing upon the wall opposite to the king. And the king's countenance changed, and in his terror he cried aloud for his diviners and wise men to expound the mystery of the words which appeared written upon the wall; but none could read the writing or interpret it. Then, by the queen's advice, Daniel was brought in; and the prophet told the king that it was his own sentence of death, for his idolatries and licentiousness, that was there before him written with the finger of God. The words were, *Mane, Thecel, and Phares*; and they signified, numbering, weighing, and division; and their interpretation was, that God had reckoned up the years of Baltassar's kingdom and finished it; that the king was weighed in the balance and found wanting; and that God had divided his kingdom, and given it to the Medes and Persians. That very night Darius, the sovereign of the Medes and Persians, attacked Baltassar in Babylon, and slew him, and made the kingdom his own.

The new king shewed favour to Daniel, and appointed him one of the governors of his kingdom, and was about to make him his chief minister. This prospect was intolerable to the great men of the court, to whom Daniel's piety and blameless life made him doubly hateful. They therefore devised a scheme for forcing the king to put his favourite to death against his will. Confident that no human power could compel Daniel to cease from his daily prayers to his God, they persuaded Darius to issue a senseless and wicked decree, forbidding any man to ask a petition of any one but himself for thirty days, under pain of being cast into a lion's den. Darius, little thinking how this law would affect Daniel, enacted it, and gave it that special sanction which, by a custom of the country, made it impossible even for himself to revoke it.

As Daniel's enemies had foreseen, he heeded not the royal order, but three times a-day opened his windows towards Jerusalem, and prayed. In vain the king then sought to save the prophet from his persecutors; he

could devise no method for escaping from the cruelty of his own law, and Daniel was thrown headlong to the lions. And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, which the king sealed with his own ring, and with the ring of his nobles, that nothing should be done against Daniel. And the king went away to his house, and laid himself down without taking supper: and meat was not set before him, and even sleep departed from him. Then the king rising very early in the morning, went in haste to the lion's den. And coming near to the den, cried with a lamentable voice to Daniel, and said to him: Daniel, servant of the living God, hath thy God, whom thou servest always, been able to deliver thee from the lions? And Daniel answering the king, said: O king, live for ever. My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut up the mouths of the lions, and they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before Him justice hath been found in me: yea and before thee, O king, I have done no offence. Then the king was exceedingly glad for him; and he commanded that Daniel should be taken out of the den: and Daniel was taken out of the den, and no hurt was found in him, because he believed in his God. And by the king's commandment, those men were brought that had accused Daniel: and they were cast into the lions' den, they and their children, and their wives; and they did not reach the bottom of the den, before the lions caught them, and broke all their bones in pieces.

This was the second time that Daniel was thus protected from the fury of the wild beasts, for already, after he had destroyed the idols of the people, he had been thrown to the lions, and miraculously protected by the God whom he served.

One other incident in the life of Daniel is related in the Bible. A wealthy Babylonian, by name Joakim, had married Susanna, a pious Jewess, of great beauty and modesty. Two of the judges of the Chaldeans, men held in esteem for their age and their office, beheld her in her husband's house, and formed criminal designs upon her virtue. One day, when bathing in the garden, they

suddenly came upon her, and tempted her to sin ; and when Susanna vehemently repulsed them, their passion was turned into hatred, and they falsely accused her of an unlawful attachment to a young man of the place. Susanna was accordingly brought to trial ; and her denial not being accounted of any weight when contradicted by the solemn declarations of two venerated men, she was condemned to death. As she was led to execution, Daniel, who saw her pass, cried aloud, I am clear from the blood of this woman. Struck with his exclamation, the people crowded round him, and he reproached them with their rash condemnation of an innocent person, and bade them try her again. They yielded to his command, and he proceeded to examine the two elders separately, asking each of them under what kind of tree they had found Susanna and her supposed lover in the garden. Not being prepared with an answer, each one replied with a guess ; and their answers disagreeing, the people were convinced of their deceit, and putting them to death, set Susanna free.

CHAP. VII. Daniel's Visions.

To none of the prophets of old was the time of the coming of the future Saviour revealed so distinctly as to the prophet Daniel. During his captivity in Babylon many mysterious visions were vouchsafed him by God, and the same divine Power interpreted them to him. His visions also comprehended the destiny of the Church of Christ itself until the end of the world. In one he beheld four beasts rising from the stormy ocean, the first a lioness, the second a bear, the third a leopard, and the fourth a mysterious creature which trod under foot the rest. From his head sprung ten horns, and another little horn, which one had eyes, and the voice of a man, uttering terrible words. Then the prophet beheld a vision of the Almighty God, and he saw the Son of man presented before the throne of the Ancient of Days, and receive power over all flesh. And an angel

told him that the four beasts were four kingdoms, and the ten horns ten other kingdoms, and the little horn yet another, which should persecute the saints, until the kingdom of the saints commenced, never to end. The four kingdoms are believed to be those of the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, and that of the little horn the kingdom of Antichrist. In another vision he saw what was to befall the Persian monarchy and its conqueror, Alexander the Great and his successors.

Again, while he was fasting and praying for his people, he was favoured with a distinct declaration of the exact dates when the captivity of the Jews should cease, and when Christ the Prince should appear, and the Jewish sacrifices cease, and the temple be defiled and utterly destroyed. The predictions in which the prophet has recorded all these announcements from Almighty God are so clear, beyond the ordinary character of divine prophecies, that unbelievers, in after times, could find no excuse for denying the divine mission of Him whose coming had been thus miraculously foretold, except by asserting that the whole work was a forgery, written by an impostor after the life and death of Jesus Christ. Daniel also is remarkable among the Hebrew prophets for having passed his days amidst the luxuries and temptations of a royal court, while the rest lived almost the lives of hermits. And yet more, so extraordinary was his sanctity, that it was revealed to him by God, that he was one of those who would be saved at the great day of judgment. Thus, of the two prophets whose eternal blessedness is especially declared in holy Scripture, the one, Elias, was the especial forerunner of those who serve God in the austerities of monastic solitude; the other, Daniel, of those who preserve their faith and piety amidst all the blandishments and cares of the world.

CHAP. VIII. The Return from the Captivity.

THE seventy years' captivity of the Jews was now ended, and their restoration was at hand. The chastisement, so repeatedly threatened by Divine justice, and so long delayed by Divine mercy, had been inflicted, and had wrought its effect upon the wayward heart of the chosen people. Seventy years' abject slavery had taught them that, in truth, there was but one God, and that the gods of the heathen were but idols, powerless to save those who blindly trusted in them. When the appointed time was come, Almighty God controlled the will and thoughts of Cyrus, who then ruled over Persia, and in the fear of God he prepared to restore the captive Jews to the land of their birth. And it is to be remarked that, incurable as had been the obstinacy with which they had fallen into idolatry, notwithstanding incessant punishments, before the seventy years' captivity, after that one severest visitation, the people frequently displayed a constancy in adhering to the worship of the Almighty alone, which yielded not to the heaviest trials. Their zeal for the law of Moses, when it was finally perverted, became little more than an attachment to every form and ceremony which formed a portion of that law, and to an innumerable number of mere human traditions, many of which were absurd and trifling, and many in reality subversive of the spirit of the law of Moses itself.

The whole body of the people (that is, of the tribes of Juda and Benjamin, together with the Levites,) did not immediately return to Judæa, though the edict by which Cyrus proclaimed their freedom gave equal permission to all. Above 40,000 left the land of their captivity under the command of Zerobabel, the grandson of King Joachin. They carried with them the sacred vessels which had been brought by their conquerors from the temple, and immediately on their arrival at Jerusalem commenced the rebuilding of the temple, amidst the mingled shoutings and weepings, which testified the joy of the young and the sadness of the aged,

at the remembrance of the still greater glories of the temple now long ago levelled with the ground.

The mixed race of people who now dwelt in Samaria sought to aid in the new work, claiming a title to do so because they worshipped, or pretended to worship, the God of the Jews. Permission being refused, on the ground of their being aliens to the chosen people, the Samaritans commenced a series of intrigues at the Persian court, with a view to put an end to the new prosperity of the Jews. As long as Cyrus lived, their malice was unsuccessful; but Cambyeses, his successor, was induced to put a stop to the building at Jerusalem. Darius Hystaspes, who succeeded Cambyeses, in the second year of his reign, permitted the works to be resumed; and in his sixth year the new temple was completed, and solemnly dedicated to the worship of Almighty God.

To Darius succeeded Xerxes on the throne of Persia, and to Xerxes Artaxerxes, in whose reign Eadras, or Ezra, a priest who had remained with many of his fellow-countrymen in Persia, led an additional number of the Jews to Jerusalem. He brought splendid gifts for the temple from the Persian monarch; and what was a far greater gift to his people, a learned, courageous, and devout heart, fixed on the reformation of the abuses which had sprung up among the Jews already settled in Jerusalem.

CHAP. IX. Queen Esther.

DURING the reign of Assuerus, who is supposed to be the same either as Xerxes or as Darius Hystaspes, the Jews who still remained in the country of their captivity passed through the narrowest possible escape from extermination. Aman, the chief minister of Assuerus, was roused to plot their destruction, in revenge for the firmness with which one of their number, Mardochai, refused to pay him the same slavish veneration which he received from the rest of the king's subjects. He

easily worked upon the weak disposition of Assuerus, persuading him that the Jews were too dangerous a race to suffer in the heart of his kingdom; and the king gave him permission to do whatever he thought fit in the matter.

Aman, then, by virtue of his office, gave directions for the slaughter of the whole Jewish people on a certain fixed day. In the very palace of the king, however, a defeat was prepared for his horrible designs. Assuerus had recently taken for his wife, in place of his divorced queen Vasthi, a fair Jewish maiden named Esther, who was the niece of this very Mardochai, and was devoted with affectionate regard to her uncle, who had adopted her as his daughter. To her Mardochai instantly applied, and bade her intercede with the king. Esther trembled at the request; as it was a law in the country that no person might enter the royal private apartment unless when summoned, under pain of death; which would be certainly inflicted, unless the monarch held out his golden sceptre to the intruder, as a token of mercy. Mardochai then bade her take her choice, either to perish with all her people, or run the risk of seeking the king's presence without his command. She listened to his words, and only bidding him instruct the Jews to fast and pray for three days and three nights on her behalf, she prepared to go to the king. On the third day, decked in her royal robes, she entered the hall where the monarch sate. And when he saw Esther the queen standing, she pleased his eyes, and he held out toward her the golden sceptre which he held in his hand: and she drew near, and kissed the top of his sceptre. And the king said to her: What wilt thou, Queen Esther? what is thy request? if thou shouldst even ask one half of the kingdom, it shall be given to thee. But she answered: If it please the king, I beseech thee to come to me this day, and Aman with thee, to the banquet which I have prepared. And the king said forthwith: Call ye Aman quickly, that he may obey Esther's will. So the king and Aman came to the banquet which the queen had prepared for them. And the

king said to her, after he had drunk wine plentifully : What dost thou desire should be given thee ? and for what thing askest thou ? although thou shouldst ask the half of my kingdom, thou shalt have it. And Esther answered : My petition and request is this : If I have found favour in the king's sight, and if it please the king to give me what I ask, and to fulfil my petition ; let the king and Aman come to the banquet which I have prepared them ; and to-morrow I will open my mind to the king. So Aman went out that day joyful and merry. And when he saw Mardochai sitting before the gate of the palace, and that he not only did not rise up to honour him, but did not so much as move from the place where he sat, he was exceedingly angry : but dissembling his anger, and returning into his house, he called together to him his friends, and Zares his wife : and he declared to them the greatness of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and with how great glory the king had advanced him above all his princes and servants. And after this he said : Queen Esther also hath invited no other to the banquet with the king, but me : and with her I am also to dine to-morrow with the king. And whereas I have all these things, I think I have nothing, so long as I see Mardochai the Jew sitting before the king's gate. Then Zares his wife, and the rest of his friends answered him : Order a great beam to be prepared, fifty cubits high ; and in the morning speak to the king, that Mardochai may be hanged upon it ; and so thou shalt go full of joy with the king to the banquet. The counsel pleased him ; and he commanded a high gibbet to be prepared.

That night Assuerus could not sleep, and he desired the history of his country to be read to him. And hearing it recorded that on one occasion a plot against his own life had been discovered by Mardochai, he asked what reward Mardochai had received for his fidelity. And they said, None at all. And the king said immediately : Who is in the court ? for Aman was coming in to the inner court of the king's house, to speak to the king, that he might order Mardochai to be hanged upon

the gibbet which was prepared for him. The servants answered : Aman standeth in the court. And the king said : Let him come in. And when he was come in, he said to him : What ought to be done to the man whom the king is desirous to honour ? but Aman thinking in his heart, and supposing that the king would honour no other but himself, answered : The man whom the king desireth to honour, ought to be clothed with the king's apparel, and to be set upon the horse that the king rideth upon, and to have the royal crown upon his head. And let the first of the king's princes and nobles hold his horse, and going through the street of the city, proclaim before him, and say : Thus shall he be honoured, whom the king hath a mind to honour. And the king said to him : Make haste, and take the robe, and the horse ; and do as thou hast spoken to Mardochai the Jew, who sitteth before the gates of the palace. Beware of passing over any of those things which thou hast spoken. So Aman took the robe, and the horse, and arraying Mardochai in the street of the city, and setting him on the horse, went before him, and proclaimed : This honour is he worthy of, whom the king hath a mind to honour. And Mardochai returned to the palace gate : and Aman made haste to go to his house, mourning and having his head covered : and he told Zares his wife, and his friends all that had befallen him. And the wise men whom he had in counsel, and his wife answered him : If Mardochai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou canst not resist him, but thou shalt fall in his sight.

While Aman was yet in the midst of his lamentation, he was summoned to attend the king to Esther's banquet. And when Assuerus was warm with wine, he said : What is thy petition, Esther, that it may be granted thee ? and what wilt thou have done ? although thou ask the half of my kingdom, thou shalt have it. Then she answered : If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please thee, give me my life for which I ask, and my people for which I request. For we are

given up, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. And would God we were sold for bondmen and bondwomen: the evil might be borne with, and I would have mourned in silence: but now we have an enemy, whose cruelty redoundeth upon the king. And king Assuerus answered, and said: Who is this, and of what power, that he should do these things? And Esther said: It is this Aman that is our adversary and most wicked enemy. Aman hearing this was forthwith astonished, not being able to bear the countenance of the king and of the queen. But the king being angry rose up, and went from the place of the banquet into the garden set with trees. Aman also rose up to entreat Esther the queen for his life; for he understood that evil was prepared for him by the king.

He fell on his knees, embracing the queen's feet; and the king returning, found him there, and crying out with rage that Aman was offering violence to the queen, the attendants seized the lost man, covered his face, and by the king's command carried him out and hung him upon the gibbet he had prepared for Mardo-chai. The edict for the massacre of the Jews was immediately repealed, Mardo-chai was raised to the highest honours, and permission was given to the Jews to put to death those of the Chaldeans and Persians who were their bitterest enemies. In memory of this signal deliverance, a festival was instituted, which is still kept by the Jews. It is called Purim, or lots, because Aman cast the lot (in Hebrew, *Pur*) to destroy them. The Book of Esther is read in their synagogues, and the name of Aman execrated with clapping of hands and stamping of feet.

CHAP. X. Heliodorus in the Temple.

THE Jewish nation, now restored to their own land, dwelt in peace during the reigns of the Persian kings of Babylon. They enjoyed a species of national freedom, as a province of their conquerors. The Bible makes no mention of the effect of the conquest of Alexander the

Great upon them ; and we next find them under the rule of Alexander's successors, to whose share the Syrian portion of Alexander's dominions had fallen. Onias the high priest administered the affairs of his fellow-countrymen during the troubles which followed Alexander's death ; and under his guidance the prosperity of the nation was undisturbed. Under Seleucus Philopater, an incident occurred which shewed that the almighty hand of God was still stretched out to protect His people. Simon, a treacherous Jew, tempted the avarice of Seleucus by accounts of the great wealth which he pretended was laid up in the temple ; and the monarch, who had hitherto protected, and even contributed gifts towards the temple worship, despatched Heliodorus, an officer in his service, to seize the treasures. On his arrival, Onias entreated him to spare the property of widows and orphans, for whose benefit the money in question was laid up ; but in vain. The people were struck with dismay, and prayed fervently for help from God. Heliodorus advanced to the temple to lay his hands on the treasures, when a man on horseback, armed with heavenly weapons, and two other angels, met him, struck him to the earth, and scourged him as he lay prostrate before him. A miraculous darkness smote the hearts of his attendants, and Heliodorus seemed on the point of death, when the prayers of Onias restored him to health ; and he returned to his master, to warn him against setting his face in opposition to the Almighty Lord of the Jews.

CHAP. XI. The Persecution under Antiochus. Eleazar and the Machabees.

SELEUCUS was succeeded on his throne by Antiochus Epiphanes, a blood-thirsty and licentious tyrant, under whom all the horrors of pillage and religious persecution were endured by the Jews. Onias, the venerable high priest, was one of the earliest victims of the troubles which now befel the whole nation. His brother Jason,

a man of vile character, by bribery, got possession of the office of high priest, and initiated the Jewish youth in all the games and vices of the heathen. A rival soon supplanted him in the favour of Antiochus, at whose court gold was all-powerful. Menelaus, a Benjamite, dispossessed Jason, and seized the sacred vessels of the temple, in order to turn them into money. Onias reprimanding him, the usurper caused him to be assassinated, while he was himself shortly after supplanted again by his own brother, Lysimachus, though bribery again restored him to his unlawful power.

In the mean time the Jewish state fell into every disorder; the services of religion were neglected, murders and licentiousness reigned uncontrolled, while fearful signs in the heavens, and visions of men and armies in conflict, portended the vengeance which Almighty God was about to take for the sins of His people. A rumour also being spread that Antiochus was dead in Egypt, Jason, the expelled high priest, gathered together an armed band, and put to death many in Jerusalem. Antiochus, however, was still alive, and speedily marched against Jerusalem, entered the city, torn as it was with intestine quarrels, and gave it up to pillage and massacre. For three days the most awful scenes were acted. Eighty thousand men, women, and children were massacred, and an immense number were made slaves. Menelaus himself led the way for the conquerors into the temple, where the ferocious king plundered the treasury and carried off the sacred vessels. He then left the city to be ruled by one Philip, a Phrygian, a man even more barbarous than his master.

Two years afterwards, Antiochus renewed his persecutions, and resolved to extirpate the whole Jewish race. He sent Apollonius to slay all the adult men, and to make slaves of the women and children. Another of his officers was commissioned to force the people to abjure the true God and the law of Moses. Under this man's frantic command the temple was defiled and converted into a temple of Jupiter Olympius, women were murdered for having their children circumcised,

and all who refused to join in the idolatrous rites were put to death. While the great multitude, scared by these horrors, dared not profess their religion, many were found faithful, and received the crown of martyrdom. Among the rest, Eleazar, one of the chief scribes, was led to death for refusing to eat swine's flesh, which was one of the unclean meats, the use of which was forbidden by the law of Moses. On the way to the place of execution, the bystanders, touched with pity for the venerable man, besought him at least to suffer some of the lawful meats to be brought to him, that he might eat them, and so appear to yield to the tyrants, while he saved his conscience, and touched nothing really unclean. Eleazar scorned the deception, knowing well that the scandal he would cause would be more grievous than all the sufferings he was called to endure; and he died nobly testifying to the faith of the one true God.

A still more terrible martyrdom succeeded that of Eleazar. Seven brothers, the Machabees, with their mother, laid down their lives for the faith. Refusing to eat swine's flesh, Antiochus condemned them to the most horrible torments, calling them forth one by one, that the sight of their brother's agonies might terrify those who yet remained. The six eldest thus expired, dreadfully mutilated, and burnt with slow fires, but retaining their constancy to the last, glorifying God, and scorning alike the insults and blandishments of the king. When the turn of the youngest came, the tyrant called his mother to witness his pangs, and bade her influence her son to recant. But all was vain. The mother strengthened her child to suffer, and after he was dead, was herself added to the band of martyrs.

CHAP. XII. Judas Machabeus.

WHILE these horrible scenes were being enacted in Jerusalem, Mathathias, a man of rare piety and valour, of the priestly race, fled with his family to Modin, a town in the hilly country of Judea. There he mourned over

the backslidings of his countrymen, and rejected all the bribes which were offered him by the emissaries of Antiochus, if he would apostatise from his faith and worship the idols. At length matters grew to a crisis, and he organised a band of faithful men, to resist the tyranny of the conqueror. Standing by one day when an apostate Jew came up to offer sacrifice to an idol, the zeal of Mathathias could not restrain itself, and he slew both the Jew and the king's officer who was forcing him to the idolatry on the spot. Then fleeing into the mountains with his five sons, he was joined by crowds of the Jews, and speedily found himself in a condition to take the field against the king's troops. Success now crowned his arms. He scoured the whole country with extraordinary rapidity, and it was not long before he had driven the armies of Antiochus from the country. He had scarcely begun to overturn the idolatry which had been every where set up, when death carried him away from his country and people. Before he died, he exhorted his five sons to complete the work he had commenced, urging them to remember the glorious examples of Divine protection which the annals of their race recorded for their encouragement. He chose Judas, surnamed Machabeus, from the rest, to command the Jewish armies, and named another of his sons, Simon, as their chief adviser.

As soon as his father was dead, Judas prepared for a renewed contest with the armies of Antiochus. His heroism was conspicuous amidst that of a family of heroes, and his faith and devotion towards God crowned his struggles with victory. He formed his troops from those Jews who had remained faithful in the time of persecution, and sought by prayer and fasting to fight ever under the special protection of the God of armies. Thus prepared, he routed Apollonius, the Syrian commander who marched against him from Samaria, and who fell by the hand of Judas himself. Seron, who succeeded to the command, was also defeated; and Lysias, the Persian viceroy, despatched three officers—Ptolemy, Nicanor, and Gorgias—to attack the Jewish

hero with an overwhelming force. Preparing themselves with prayer and fasting, the Jews rushed upon their invaders, defeated them with great slaughter, and on the renewal of the campaign the following year, again routed the Syrian force at Antioch.

Judas, then, now the undisputed master of his country, turned all his energies to the purification of the land from its idols. He cleansed the temple, where the sacred court was overgrown with weeds and wild trees, and restored the worship of God with all the splendour in his power. When the neighbouring tribes, jealous of the renewed greatness of the Jews, molested them, Judas stormed their cities, and crushed their armies with almost incredible rapidity. On one occasion, in fighting with Gorgias, the governor of Idumea, some of his own troops were unexpectedly slain, and on examining their bodies, it was found that they had possessed themselves of certain votive offerings from the idol temples, a thing forbidden by the law of Moses, and which God thus instantly had punished. Hoping, nevertheless, that they had sinned either in partial ignorance, or had repented before their deaths, Judas sent a large amount of silver to the temple, that prayers and sacrifices might be offered for their souls.

Antiochus now marched in person against the irresistible Jewish leader; but a mortal disease smote him on his progress. Still, mad with rage, he persisted in his advance, till loathsome and agonising symptoms compelled him to stay his march. Racked with anguish of mind as well as body, his conscience smote him for his cruelties to the Jews; and before he died, he gave directions for a cessation of the persecutions, even protesting that he would himself become a Jew. His son, Antiochus Eupator, succeeded, and continued the war against Judas. Victory was still with the Jews, and Lysias, still viceroy of Persia, concluded a peace with Judas. Traitors in Jerusalem, however, again invited Antiochus to renew the war, and he marched into Judea with 120,000 men and 32 elephants armed for battle. Judas met the king undaunted, and his youngest

brother, Eleazar, devoted himself to death in the hope of destroying the persecutor of his country. Perceiving that one of the elephants was conspicuous for the splendour of its trappings, and imagining that Antiochus himself might be riding on its back, Eleazar threw himself beneath the monstrous beast, and thrusting the sword into its body, brought it down to the ground, crushed to death himself by the elephant's fall. The king was not there, but he was so little successful, that he soon concluded a peace, and returned to Syria.

CHAP. XIII. Deaths of Judas Machabeus, Jonathan and Simon High Priests.

SHORTLY after the conclusion of peace with the Jews, Antiochus Eupator died. His cousin Demetrius plotted against him, put him to death, and seized his throne. Alcimus, a traitorous Jew, persuaded the new king to nominate him high priest of the Jews, and to send him with an army against Judas. After doing great mischief, Alcimus was driven out of the country by Judas, and he persuaded Demetrius to despatch a second expedition against the Jews under Nicanor. Nicanor was defeated by Judas, and afterwards made a treaty with him. This treaty Nicanor observed faithfully till the machinations of Alcimus, who accused him of treachery to the king, induced him to break his faith with Judas, and he planned a scheme for making Judas his prisoner. His plot was discovered; war ensued; Nicanor attacked the Jews with an immense army; Judas, strengthened by a heavenly vision, in which he beheld the prophet Jeremiah and the high priest Onias encouraging him in his great work, met the invaders, slew five and thirty thousand men, and among the rest Nicanor himself.

But the hour of Judas was now at hand. He had accomplished the work that was given him to do; and the people whom he had hitherto led to unfailing victories were growing weary of the struggle against the overwhelming force of the Syrian monarchy. A large

army under Bacchides and Alcimus again attacked Judas, who was deserted by all but eight hundred of his troops. This little band rushed undaunted upon their foes, and by their onset made their ranks for a time to waver; but the numbers against whom Judas fought were too overpowering for human valour, and he and his band died fighting upon the field.

His brother Jonathan was chosen to supply his place; and with all whom he could induce to follow his standard, retreated to the desert of Thecua, whence he harassed the Syrians with incessant attacks. Success crowned his arms, and finally he compelled Bacchides to treat for peace. His friendship was even sought by the contending parties, who now began to divide the people of Syria, and for some time he maintained his country in prosperity and independent peace. During the struggles which followed for the Syrian throne, Jonathan was at last entrapped by Tryphon, an officer of great power, and who aimed at the royal dignity. Invited to visit Tryphon at Ptolemais, he was seized; and though he himself was spared, all his followers were put to death by the traitor.

Simon, the only remaining son of Mathathias, instantly roused the Jews to release their high priest and leader from captivity. He marched against Tryphon, who betook himself again to treachery, and offered to set Jonathan free, if a large ransom were paid for him, and his two sons sent as hostages for his future conduct. The moment the money and the young men were in Tryphon's hands he murdered both Jonathan and his sons, and marched back into Syria. Simon buried his slaughtered brother with the highest honours, and assumed the leadership and priesthood of the Jewish people. After a long life he was murdered by his son-in-law Ptolemy. His son John Hyrcanus succeeded him both as ruler and high priest; and he, again, was followed by his son Aristobolus, who assumed the title of king. A series of Jewish sovereigns succeeded to Aristobolus, until Herod was made king of Judea, now a Roman province, by the Roman emperor. Then the

sceptre, as had been foretold by the patriarch Jacob upon his dying bed, departed from Juda, and the Redeemer of the world was born.

Long before that time the prophets had ceased in the land. Habaccuc, Aggeus, and Zacharias had prophesied during the seventy years' captivity, and the two latter had encouraged the people during the rebuilding of the temple. Malachias was the last of the prophets. He prophesied after the temple was rebuilt; and the last words of his prophecy are a prediction of the coming of John Baptist, whose preaching, in order to prepare the way of our Lord Jesus Christ, he foretels under the name of the prophet Elias. He foretold also the institution of the sacrifice of the Mass, and its ultimate celebration throughout every heathen nation of the world: "From the rising of the sun," said the prophet, "even to the going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place there shall be sacrifice, and a clean oblation offered to My name; for My name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts."

BOOK VI.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

CHAP. I. The Annunciation.

ABOUT four thousand years after the creation and fall of man, it pleased Almighty God to fulfil His promise to Adam, that from his seed should be born a Saviour to redeem the world. In Nazareth, a city of Galilee, dwelt a virgin, descended in a direct line from David and Abraham, named Mary. From the first moment of her existence the Holy Spirit of God had been with her, and she was prepared by His divine power to be the sinless mother of the Redeemer. Her parents had betrothed her in marriage to a devout kinsman, Joseph by name; but she lived and died a spotless virgin, protected and cherished as a sister by her husband until his death.

When the day decreed in the counsels of God was come, the angel Gabriel was sent to Mary to announce to her that she was to be the mother of the Son of God. Hail, thou that art full of grace! said the angel to her, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women. And Mary was troubled at his saying, and thought within herself what the meaning of this salutation might be. And the angel said: Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God: behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father: and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

And she said to the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not man? And the angel said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren: because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. And Mary went in haste into the hill country, to the house of Elizabeth her cousin.

Elizabeth herself was about to be the mother of the forerunner of the coming Saviour, by a miraculous exertion of the power of God. She was of the tribe of Levi, and family of Aaron, and, with her husband Zachary, had grown old without bearing children. And they were both just before God, keeping His commandments in a blameless life. Five months before the angel had appeared to Mary, it came to pass that Zachary was offering incense in his priestly office in the temple, and the multitude of the people were praying without, when there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zachary seeing him, was troubled; and fear fell upon him: but the angel said to him: Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard: and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name John; and thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth: for he shall be great before the Lord; and shall drink no wine nor strong drink: and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb: and he shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God: and he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias; that he may turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the incredulous to the wisdom of the just, to prepare for the Lord a perfect people. And Zachary said to the angel: Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in

years. And the angel answering, said to him : I am Gabriel who stand before God ; and am sent to speak to thee, and to bring thee these good tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak until the day wherein these things shall come to pass ; because thou hast not believed my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time. And the people were waiting for Zachary : and they wondered that he stayed so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak to them : and they understood that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he made signs to them, and remained dumb. And as the angel had foretold, so it was fulfilled.

CHAP. II. The Salutation. The Birth of John Baptist.

WHEN Mary reached the house of Elizabeth, a miracle declared the honour to which the Lord had exalted her, and proclaimed her the mother of God. As she entered into the house, and saluted Elizabeth, the unborn babe in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy at the sound of Mary's voice. And Elizabeth herself was filled with the Holy Ghost, and she cried out with a loud voice, and said : Blessed art thou among women ; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me ? For behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed ; because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord. And Mary said : My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour : because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid : for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done great things to me : and holy is His name. And His mercy is from generation to generations, to them that fear Him. He hath shewed might in His arm : He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He



THE SALUTATION.

hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich He hath sent away empty. He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy. As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever.—And Mary abode with her about three months: and she returned to her own house.

And when Elizabeth's time was come, she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and kinsfolks heard that the Lord had shewed His great mercy towards her: and they congratulated with her. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child: and they called him by his father's name, Zachary. And his mother answering, said: Not so; but he shall be called John. And they said to her: There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And Zachary asked for writing tablets, and wrote the words, His name is John. And they all wondered. And immediately his mouth was opened, and his tongue loosed; and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came upon all their neighbours: and all these words were divulged over all the mountain country of Judea. And all they who had heard them laid them up in their heart, saying: What a one, think ye, shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him. And Zachary his father was filled with the Holy Ghost: and he prophesied, saying: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people: and hath raised up a horn of salvation to us, in the house of David His servant: as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who are from the beginning: Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us: to shew mercy to our fathers; and to remember His holy covenant. The oath which He swore to Abraham our father, that He would grant to us: That being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we may serve Him without fear, in holiness and justice before Him all our days. And thou, child, shalt

be called the prophet of the Most High : for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare His way : to give knowledge of salvation to His people, unto the remission of their sins, through the bowels of the mercy of our God : in which the Orient, from on high, hath visited us : to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death : to direct our feet into the way of peace.—And the child grew, and from his earliest years commenced the life he was hereafter to lead as the preacher of repentance, to prepare the way for the coming Saviour. He passed his days in the deserts, under the special inspiration of Almighty God, until the day was come when he was to be summoned to fulfil his work.

CHAP. III. The Nativity.

WHEN the time was at hand for the birth of Mary's Son, the ancient prophecy respecting the place where the Saviour should be born was fulfilled through the instrumentality of the Roman conquerors of Judea. Mary and Joseph dwelt at Nazareth : but it had been foretold by the prophet Micheas, that from Bethlehem, though one of the least of the thousands* of Juda, should come forth the ruler of Israel. An enrolment of all the Jews was commanded by the Roman authority ; and every one was compelled to attend in person at the place to which, by their family, they belonged. Mary and Joseph, therefore, being of the royal family of David, left Nazareth and went to Bethlehem, which was the city of David. And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger : because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night-watches over their

* Respecting the division of the people into *thousands*, see Exod. xviii. 25.



THE INFANT JESUS.

flock. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them; and the brightness of God shone round about them: and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will. And it came to pass, that after the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem; and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath shewed to us. And they came with haste: and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in a manger. And all were amazed at what was heard and seen: but Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

CHAP. IV. The Wise Men from the East. The Circumcision, Presentation, and Flight into Egypt.

BEFORE the manger in which the infant Redeemer was laid, there next appeared three travellers from the countries far to the east of Judea. Throughout the whole heathen world traditions existed respecting the coming of a Saviour to redeem the world; and when the time for the birth of Jesus was at hand, a miracle had revealed it to these travellers, who, for their learning and piety, are called the Wise Men. A bright light, or star, appeared to them at their home in the East, announcing that Almighty God had wrought some wonderful work, which He thus announced to them. Taught by divine guidance, they instantly concluded that the prophecies respecting the birth of Christ were fulfilled, and they hastened to Jerusalem, as the chief city of Judea, to make inquiries where the child was born. And Herod,

the king of Judea, hearing of their inquiries, and learning that they called the new-born babe the king of the Jews, filled with jealousy, and supposing that Jesus was about to be set up as an earthly king, assembled the priests and learned men, and inquired of them where the prophecies foretold that Christ should be born. And they said to him : In Bethlehem of Juda : for so it is written by the prophet : And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come forth the ruler, who shall rule My people Israel. Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, inquired of them diligently the time of the star's appearing to them : and sending them into Bethlehem, said : Go, and search diligently after the child : and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore Him. This he said in hypocrisy, that he might seize the child, and murder Him. And the wise men went their way : and behold, the star, which they had seen in the East, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And, seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And going into the house, they found the child with Mary His mother : and falling down, they adored Him : and opening their treasures, they offered to Him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being warned by God in a dream, that they should not return and tell Herod the tidings he desired, they silently departed to their own country by another way.

When He was eight days old, Jesus was circumcised, according to the law of Moses ; and as the same law enjoined, forty days after His birth His mother went to Jerusalem to present herself in the temple, for the purification enjoined after child-birth, and to offer her son to the Lord, as the first-born, with a pair of doves, or young pigeons. In Jerusalem dwelt an aged man, named Simeon, devout and just before God, who waited in hope for the coming of the promised Saviour, and to whom the Holy Ghost had revealed that he should not die till he had seen the Christ. And when Joseph and Mary brought the child Jesus into the temple, Simeon

was led thither also by the Holy Ghost ; and he took the babe into his arms, and blessed God, and said : Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word, in peace : because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people ; a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of Thy people Israel. And Joseph and Mary wondered at his words ; and he blessed them, and said that the child was appointed by Almighty God to be the salvation of many in Israel, and to be the stumbling-block against which many others would fall. And to Mary herself he said, that her soul also should be pierced by a sword, through her share in the sufferings of her Son. Anna also, a devout widow and a prophetess, who worshipped God without ceasing in the temple, with prayers and fastings, came in and confessed that Jesus was the promised Saviour ; and she made known His birth to those who, like herself, were waiting for the redemption of Israel. And Mary and Joseph returned with the babe to Nazareth.

Meanwhile, the first token of the enmity of wicked men to the Redeemer of their race was displayed by king Herod. Finding himself mocked by the wise men, and unable to learn where the new-born babe lay, he massacred every male child in Bethlehem and the neighbouring country, hoping thus to destroy the dreaded future king. But already Jesus was safe from his power. An angel had appeared to Joseph, and bade him fly, with Jesus and Mary, into Egypt, and there await the commands of God. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Osee, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." And another prophecy also was accomplished by the horrible murder of the innocent babes in Bethlehem ; the words of Jeremias were fulfilled : "A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning : Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." On Herod's death, an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying : Rise, and take the child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel : for they are dead who sought

the life of the child. Then Joseph took the child, and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither: and being warned in sleep, he retired into the parts of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets, that He shall be called a Nazarene.

CHAP. V. Jesus with the Doctors. The Preaching of John Baptist. The Baptism of Jesus.

EVERY year Joseph and Mary went from Nazareth to Jerusalem, to keep the feast of the pasch, or passover. When Jesus was twelve years old, they went up as usual, and returned again, leaving the child behind them, not regarding His absence, because they imagined that He was travelling in company with some of their friends or kindred. But on the journey home He was nowhere to be found, and they returned in haste and fear to Jerusalem; and after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom, and His answers. And seeing Him, they wondered. And His mother said to Him: Son, why hast Thou done so to us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them: How is it that you sought Me? did you not know that I must be about the things that are My Father's? And His mysterious words astonished them; but Mary hid His sayings in her heart, for she knew that they were the words of God, and full of heavenly truth, though for a while incomprehensible to all who heard them. Jesus then returned to His home at Nazareth, where Joseph exercised his trade as a carpenter, and lived unknown to men, an obedient child to His mother and His reputed father. The Scripture records nothing more of His boyhood and youth, but that as He advanced in wisdom and in age, He advanced also in

favour with both God and man. Though He was the eternal Son of God, He was also true man, and His sinless human soul passed through all the stages of experience which are the appointed lot of those whose nature He had taken upon Him.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius, Jesus now being about thirty years old, John Baptist was called from the deserts by the Spirit of God into the country round about the river Jordan. He came and preached to the Jews, who were, for the most part, sunk in utter licentiousness, bidding them do penance for their sins, and prepare for the coming of their long-expected Saviour, as it was written in the book of the words of Isaias the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord: make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. He said, therefore, to the multitudes that came forth to be baptised by him: Ye offspring of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance; and do not begin to say: We have Abraham for our father. For I say to you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire. He also baptised all who came to him in penitence, washing their bodies in water, as a token of the purification of heart to which he called them. His baptism, unlike the baptism afterwards instituted by Christ Himself, conveyed no regenerating grace to the soul; it was a token and enforcement of that inward purity which the holy law of God demands from all His creatures. His garb also was a type of the mortification of the spirit. He wore a camel's hide, fastened with a leathern girdle, and ate locusts and wild honey.

Multitudes of people crowded to the Baptist's preach-

ing, and he instructed persons of every class of life in the duties especially belonging to their state.

At length Jesus Himself came to the Baptist, and bade him baptise Him. But John refused, saying: I ought to be baptised by Thee; and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering, said to him: Suffer it now: for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, being baptised, went up presently out of the water: and, behold, the heavens were opened to Him: and He saw the Spirit of God descending, as a dove, and coming upon Him. And, behold, a voice from heaven, saying: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

CHAP. VI. The Temptation of Jesus.

THE arch enemy of mankind now made his first great assault upon the seed of the woman, who was come into the world to crush his head. The Son of God commenced His ministry by enduring those attacks of the foul spirit which are the lot of all the children of Adam, in order both to teach us how to vanquish the devil, and—as St. Paul assures us—in order that He might personally experience the dreadful nature of Satanic temptations; and, in His boundless compassion, might bear in mind what He had Himself endured, when we should cry to Him for help hereafter to save us from our foes.

After His baptism He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, that there Satan might tempt Him to sin against God. For forty days and forty nights He fasted, His human nature sustained by Divine power. This prayer and fasting was His preparation for the temptation, and an example to us for our imitation. And as the devil frequently makes use of every means we take to resist him, and turns them into snares for our souls, so he took occasion from the hunger which followed the fast of Jesus, to tempt Him to disobey the will of God. It was the Divine pleasure that Jesus should not exert His miraculous powers in finding food

for Himself at this moment. Therefore the tempter came, and defied Him to prove Himself the Son of God by making the stones before Him into bread. But Jesus said: It is written: Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him: If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down; for it is written: That He hath given His angels charge of Thee; and in their hands shall they bear Thee up, lest, perhaps, Thou hurt Thy foot against a stone. This would have been a tempting of God, by calling for a needless miracle; and Jesus replied to Satan: It is written again: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain, and shewed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. And he said: All these will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and adore me. The sight which the devil displayed to our Saviour was either a supernatural vision of the glories of the kingdoms of the earth, permitted to him by the will of God, or a glowing description of the fascinations of worldly power. But Jesus said: Begone, Satan: for it is written: The Lord thy God thou shalt adore, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left Him; and, behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

With what expectations Satan thus tempted our blessed Lord, the Scripture does not record. It seems certain, however, that the devil was ignorant of His true divinity; and perhaps he made these attempts upon Jesus Christ with a view to discover whether He really were the eternal Son of God. We must suppose that the temptation with which he tried Him was a real temptation; consisting in that same suggesting of evil thoughts to His mind which is the instrument by which he leads us into sin. On the immaculate soul of Jesus these unholy suggestions fell utterly powerless; because it was impossible that He should sin; being impeccable in His human nature, being also true God as well as true man, and, lastly, being filled with all the fulness

of the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, we must believe that unspeakable anguish was caused to the spotless soul of our blessed Redeemer by the mere presentation of unlawful ideas to His mind; and thus it is that St. Paul says that "we have not a high-priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities; but one who was tempted in all things as we are, but without sin."

In the mean time messengers came from the rulers at Jerusalem to John, as he was baptising in Bethany, to ask him who he really was. And John answered, I am not the Christ. And they asked him: What then? Art thou Elias? And he said: I am not: Art thou the prophet? And he answered: No. Then they said to him: Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself? He said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaias said. And they that were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him: Why, then, dost thou baptise, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying: I baptise in water: but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not. The same is He that shall come after me, who is preferred before me; the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania beyond the Jordan, where John was baptising. The next day John saw Jesus coming to him; and he said: Behold the Lamb of God; behold He who taketh away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said: After me cometh a man who is preferred before me, because He was before me. And I knew Him not: but that He may be made manifest in Israel, therefore am I come baptising in water. And John gave testimony, saying: I saw the Spirit coming down as a dove from heaven, and He remained upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He who sent me to baptise in water said to me: He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, He it is that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw: and I gave testimony, that this is the Son of God. Again the follow-

ing day, John stood, and two of his disciples. And looking upon Jesus as He was walking, he said : Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak : and they followed Jesus.

Thus was the mission of the Baptist fulfilled. He pointed out the Lamb of God to all who came to him ; and himself was soon hurried away to receive the crown of martyrdom. He roused the rage of Herod, the ruler of Judea, by reproving him for his adultery with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip ; and the tyrant, who for a while had paid him a measure of respect and honour, seized him and cast him into prison. And when John was carried away, Jesus retired to the borders of the country which had formerly been the abode of the tribes of Zabulon and Nephthalim ; and thus was accomplished the prophecy of Isaïas : The land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim, the way of the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles : the people that sat in darkness, saw great light : and to them that sat in the region of the shadow of death, light is sprung up.

And from that time He began to preach, and called all men to do penance for their sins. Walking by the sea of Galilee, He called the first two of those who were afterwards His Apostles. He saw two brethren, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishers). And He saith to them : Come after Me, and I will make you become fishers of men. And they immediately leaving their nets, followed Him. And going on from thence, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets : and He called them. And they immediately leaving their nets and their father, followed Him.

CHAP. VII. The Marriage at Cana. Jesus preaches in Galilee.

THE first miracle which Jesus wrought, to shew to men that He was come with Divine power, was at a marriage-feast in Cana, a town of Galilee. He was there with

His mother and His disciples ; for it was the will of our blessed Lord to mix freely with the Jews, in their houses and their entertainments, wheresoever there was no sin. The Baptist lived apart from his fellow-creatures, like the prophet Elias, in whose spirit he came, and like the hermits of the Christian Church ; Jesus Christ lived, as we say, in the world. And hence it was, that while the unbelieving Jews charged John Baptist with madness, they called Jesus a glutton and a winebibber, and a friend of sinners.

At the marriage-feast of Cana, after a while the wine failed, and Mary said to her Son, They have no wine. But Jesus replied in mysterious words, bidding her wait the moment when He would manifest His divine will. Mary then, as ever, pondering His words in her heart, bade the servants obey whatsoever Jesus should say to them. And there were six large water-pots standing by ; and Jesus said to the servants : Fill the water-pots with water ; and they filled them to the brim. And He bade them draw forth the water, and carry it to the master of the feast. And as they poured it, they beheld that it was become fine wine, by the almighty power of God. Thus, say the Scriptures, Jesus manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. He vouchsafed this display of His divine omnipotence for the consolation and strengthening of His followers, and they believed in Him with a faith more firm and rejoicing than before.

While the disciples of Jesus, still few in number, thus adored His love and wisdom, a violent persecution was raised against Him by others in Galilee. He came to Nazareth where He was brought up : and He went into the synagogue, according to His custom on the sabbath-day : and He rose up to read : and the book of Isaias the prophet was delivered unto Him. And as He unfolded the book, He found the place where it was written : The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me : wherefore He hath anointed Me, to preach the Gospel to the poor He hath sent Me, to heal the contrite of heart, to preach deliverance to the captives, and sight to the blind, to set

at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of reward. And when He had folded the book, He restored it to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them: This day is fulfilled this Scripture in your ears. And all gave testimony to Him: and they wondered at the words of grace that proceeded from His mouth, and they said: Is not this the son of Joseph? And He said to them: Doubtless you will say to Me this similitude: Physician, heal Thyself: as great things as we have heard done in Capharnaum, do also here in Thy own country. And He said: Amen I say to you, that no prophet is accepted in his own country. In truth I say to you, there were many widows in the days of Elias in Israel, when heaven was shut up three years and six months: when there was a great famine throughout all the land: and to none of them was Elias sent, but to a widow at Sarepta of Sidon. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet: and none of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, hearing these things, were filled with anger. And they rose up and thrust Him out of the city: and they brought Him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong. But He passing through the midst of them, went His way. And He went down into Capharnaum, a city of Galilee, and there He taught them on the sabbath-days. And they were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power. And in the synagogue there was a man who had an unclean devil, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying: Let us alone, what have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying: Hold thy peace, and go out of him. And when the devil had thrown him into the midst, he went out of him, and hurt him not at all. And there came fear upon all, and they talked among themselves, saying: What word is this, for with autho-

rity and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they go out? And the fame of Him was published in every place of the country.

CHAP. VIII. The Miraculous Draught of Fishes. Jesus heals many Diseases. The calling of Matthew.

THE almighty power of Jesus, who controlled all those laws of nature which He had Himself in the beginning appointed for the universe to obey, was now displayed in many wonderful miracles. He healed Simon's mother-in-law of a fever; He cast out devils from those who were possessed, bidding the devils be silent as He cast them out. Near the lake of Genesareth, the multitudes pressed upon Him in crowds, to hear His preaching; and seeing two fishermen's vessels drawn up upon the bank, He entered into one of them, which belonged to Peter, and desired him to put out a short space from the shore; and from the boat He taught the people the word of God. And when He had ceased to speak, He said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering, said to Him: Master, we have laboured all the night, and have taken nothing: but at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net was breaking. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying: Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: and so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt be taking men. And they brought their ships to shore, and left all, and followed Jesus.

Another day, as He sat teaching, He was surrounded by a concourse of Pharisees, a sect of Jews who prided themselves on a close observance of every minute precept of the law, while they cared little for its great commands. There were present also many of the Scribes, men learned in all the laws and traditions of the Jews, and who, like the Pharisees, from the first abhorred the doctrines of Jesus, who, they foresaw, would destroy the authority they had usurped over the consciences of their fellow-creatures. And there was brought in a bed a man who had the palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before Him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went upon the roof, and let him down through the tiles, with his bed, into the midst, before Jesus. And when He saw their faith, He said: Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the Scribes and the Pharisees began to think, saying: Who is this who speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? And when Jesus knew their thoughts, answering He said to them: What is it you think in your hearts? Which is it easier to say: Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say: Arise, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He said to the sick of the palsy), I say to thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And immediately rising up before them, he took up the bed on which he lay; and he went away into his own house, glorifying God. And all were astonished; and they glorified God. And they were filled with fear, saying: We have seen wonderful things to-day.

Among those who followed Jesus most readily were many whose lives had hitherto been more openly vicious than those of the Pharisees, who cloaked their sins under an outward garb of rigid observances. The publicans, or tax-gatherers, were a class of men notorious for their cruelty and ungodly lives; but many of these men forsook their sins, and were received with mercy by Jesus. One of these, by name Levi, or Matthew,

became one of the twelve Apostles and rulers of the Christian Church. Jesus saw him sitting in the place where he received the customs, and said to him : Follow Me. And Matthew rose instantly, and forsook all his worldly goods, and followed Jesus. But first he made Him a great feast in his own house : and there was a great company of publicans, and of others, that were at table with them. But their Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying to His disciples : Why do you eat and drink with publicans and sinners ? And Jesus answering, said to them : They who are in health need not the physician ; but they that are sick : I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance. And they said to Him : Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees in like manner ; but thine eat and drink ? And He said to them : Can you make the children of the bridegroom fast, whilst the bridegroom is with them ? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them ; then shall they fast in those days.

CHAP. IX. Nicodemus. The Samaritan Woman.

AMONG the Pharisees there was one, distinguished for learning and power, whose heart was touched by the words of Jesus. Yet he dared not openly confess himself His disciple, but came to Him secretly by night, and said to Him : Rabbi, we know that Thou art come a teacher from God : for no man can do these miracles which Thou doest, unless God was with him. Jesus answered, and said to him : Amen, amen I say to thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith to Him : How can a man be born when he is old ? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born again ? Jesus answered : Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh : and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit.

Wonder not that I said to thee, you must be born again. The Spirit breatheth where He will ; and thou hearest His voice ; but thou knowest not whence He cometh, nor whither He goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Thus our blessed Lord foretold the institution of the sacrament of Baptism, by which the Spirit of God enters into the soul, and gives it a birth into a new world, namely, the Christian Church ; so that as that which is born of the flesh, that is, by the natural birth of a child from its parents, is flesh only, and inherits the nature of those who gave it birth, thus whatsoever souls are born of the Spirit, receiving the Holy Spirit from the hands of God, at the moment of their baptism, are henceforth spiritual, and possess a new nature. By their old nature they would live a life of sin ; by their new nature they are enabled to live a life of holiness, under the control of the Spirit of God.

But Nicodemus could understand nothing of this. He knew not what a new birth could be. And Jesus said to him, in order to shew him that all his learning was worthless, unless he was taught by God, " Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things ? " And then He foretold His own death, and the salvation which faith in Him would bring to all that should believe. " As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son ; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him. He that believeth in Him is not judged : but he that doth not believe is already judged : because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment : because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness, rather than the light : for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved. But he that doeth

truth, cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God."

After this, having been at Jerusalem, journeying from thence into Galilee, Jesus passed through Samaria. His message of mercy was as yet confined ordinarily to the Jews ; but on this occasion He declared Himself to a woman of that mixed race who lived in Samaria, and who were regarded with jealousy and hatred by the Jewish people. He came in His journey to Sichar, a city of Samaria, near the piece of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria, to draw water. Jesus saith to her : Give Me to drink (for His disciples were gone into the city to buy food). Then that Samaritan woman saith to Him : How dost Thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman ? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans. Jesus answered, and said to her : If thou didst know the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink ; thou, perhaps, wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. The woman saith to Him : Sir, Thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep : from whence then hast Thou living water ? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle ? Jesus answered, and said to her : Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again : but he that shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall not thirst for ever. But the water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up unto everlasting life. The woman saith to Him : Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw. Jesus saith to her : Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered, and said : I have no husband. Jesus said to her : Thou hast said well, I have no husband : for thou hast had five husbands : and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband. This thou hast said truly. The woman saith

to Him : Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Our fathers adored on this mountain : and you say, that at Jerusalem is the place where men must adore. Jesus saith to her : Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when you shall neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem adore the Father. You adore that which you know not : we adore that which we know : for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorer shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore Him. God is a spirit : and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith to Him : I know that the Messias cometh (who is called Christ) : therefore, when He is come, He will tell us all things. Jesus saith to her : I am He, who am speaking with thee. And immediately His disciples came : and they wondered that He talked with the woman. Yet no man said : What seekest Thou, or why talkest Thou with her ? The woman, therefore, left her water-pot, and went away into the city, and saith to those men : Come, and see a man who hath told me all things that ever I did. Is not He the Christ ? Then they went out of the city, and came to Him. In the mean time the disciples prayed Him, saying : Rabbi, eat. But He said to them : I have food to eat which you know not of. The disciples, therefore, said one to another : Hath any man brought Him any thing to eat ? Jesus said to them : My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work. Do not you say, there are yet four months, and then the harvest cometh ? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and see the countries, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto everlasting life ; that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. For in this is the saying true : that it is one man that soweth, and it is another that reapeth. I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour : others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours. Now of that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him, for the word of the woman giving tes-

timony, that He told me whatsoever I have done. So when the Samaritans were come to Him, they desired Him that He would stay there. And He stayed there two days. And many more believed in Him because of His own word. And they said to the woman : We now believe, not for thy saying : for we ourselves have heard Him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.

CHAP. X. Jesus heals on the Sabbath-day. The Twelve Apostles.

OF the innumerable traditions with which the Jews had corrupted the law of Moses, making it a burden of ceremonies impossible to be borne, and at the same time destroying the true spirit in which Almighty God commanded it to be obeyed, none were more absurd than the rules which had been invented for keeping the Sabbath-day. On a certain Sabbath the Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking the Divine law, because, as He went through the corn-fields, His disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them : Why do you that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath-days ? And Jesus, answering them, said : Have you not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was hungry, and they that were with him ? How he went into the house of God, and took and eat the bread of proposition, and gave to them that were with him, which it is not lawful to eat, but only for the priests ? And He said to them : The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath. And it came to pass, also, on another Sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue, and taught. And there was a man, whose right hand was withered. And the Scribes and Pharisees watched to see if He would heal on the Sabbath ; that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts ; and said to the man who had the withered hand : Arise, and stand forth in the midst. And he, rising, stood forth. Then Jesus said to them : I ask you, if it be lawful on the Sabbath-

days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy? And, looking round about on them all, He said to the man: Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and his hand was restored. And they were filled with madness; and they talked one with another, what they might do to Jesus.

After this our blessed Lord chose out twelve of His disciples, and appointed them Apostles (meaning persons *sent forth*), to preach the Gospel to their fellow-countrymen, as afterwards He appointed them to preach to the whole world, and to rule the Christian Church. Their names were: The first, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother. James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the publican, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus. Simon Chananeus, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. Bartholomew is supposed to be the same as Nathanael; and Thaddeus is also called Jude.

CHAP. XI. The Sermon on the Mount.

A GREAT multitude of people were now flocking around Jesus; and He healed their diseases, a miraculous virtue going forth from His garments upon every person who touched Him. And as the people stood waiting to hear His words, He went up to an elevated spot of ground, and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner

of evil against you falsely, for My sake ; rejoice, and be exceeding glad : because your reward is very great in heaven ; for so they persecuted the prophets, that were before you.

Thus Jesus taught the people, that those things which the world counts mean and worthless are of the highest price in the sight of God, and the sources of blessing to those who possess them. Then He reminded His disciples of their relationship to their fellow-creatures. You are the salt of the earth, He said ; but if the salt have lost its savour, with what shall it be salted ? It is then good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden upon by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. As salt preserves meat from corrupting, so the followers of Christ preserve in the world a certain respect for morality, and for their sake God regards it with an eye of mercy. And like a light, they display to mankind the splendours of God's kingdom, and the beauty of holiness, and draw others to glorify God as they themselves glorify Him.

Then He shewed them, that though He came to abolish the law of Moses, which was so dear to Jewish hearts, He abolished it by really fulfilling it. He would fulfil it by enabling His people to obey all its moral and unchangeable obligations with a more perfect obedience than as yet had been in their power ; and by accomplishing that great work of man's salvation, which the types, and ceremonies, and rules of the old law were designed to foreshadow ; and thus *all*, each separate portion in its own way, would be fulfilled. Think not, said Jesus, that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For amen I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these

least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

And, moreover, this obedience to the moral law which Christians were to attain, must not be that mere outward formal obedience which the Scribes and Pharisees practised, while their inward hearts remained foul and disobedient. It was to be an obedience, not only to the letter, or exact rules of the law, but to its spirit and meaning. It was to embrace all the acts, whether of word or deed, of heart or of will, and whether great or small, which might even lead to the neglect of any one of God's commands. I tell you, our blessed Lord said, that unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and of the Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old : Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill, shall be guilty of the judgment : but I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be guilty of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, *Raca*, shall be guilty of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be guilty of hell fire. Therefore, if thou offerest thy gift at the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath any thing against thee ; leave there thy gift before the altar, and first go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Make an agreement with thy adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him ; lest, perhaps, the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence, till thou pay the last farthing. The word *Raca* was a term expressing hasty passion and contempt, and would be punished by God with that lesser punishment, which was inflicted by the "council," which was the Jewish court of seventy-two judges, or Sanhedrim, and which at this time had not the power of life and death ; while the use of the words, "Thou fool," express that indulgence in the mortal sin of anger, which,

unless repented of, brings the sinner to the torments of hell.

Thus, also, in the condemnation of actual adultery was to be included every impure thought. And in order that men might be free from all temptations to sin, they were to cast away every thing that would lead them to it, even though dear to them as a hand or an eye. If thy right eye scandalise thee (that is, if it cause thee to sin), said Jesus, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is better for thee that one of thy members should perish, than that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand cause thee to offend, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is better for thee that one of thy members should perish, than that thy whole body should go into hell.

The permission to separate from their wives, and marry again during their first wife's lifetime, which had been till then permitted to the Jews, because of the weakness of human nature, was now to be withheld, because the grace which Christ would bestow was to be sufficient to enable us to conquer the most violent passions. The rash swearing, and the vindictive punishments, so common among the Jews, were also to be put away. Our Lord said: You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not forswear thyself; but shalt perform thy oaths to the Lord. But I say to you, not to swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king: neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, yea, yea, no, no: for whatsoever is more than these, is to be counted evil. You have heard that it hath been said: An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, not to resist evil: but if any man strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall force thee to go one mile, go with him other two. Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would

borrow of thee, turn not away. You have heard that it hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you: Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: that you may be the children of your Father, who is in heaven: who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if you love those that love you, what reward shall you have? do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? do not also the heathens the same? Be you, therefore, perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.

All oaths were not indeed forbidden, as we find from other parts of Scripture, and as the Church has ever taught; but all rash oaths, that is, all that are unsanctioned by lawful authority, are to be strictly avoided. And so, too, it was not meant by our blessed Lord that we are positively to turn our cheek to those who smite us, but that all revenge is forbidden, and that we are to love our enemies, as God loves us, and as He loves all men; not setting before us any of our fellow-sinners as our pattern for imitation, but aiming at that perfect holiness which belongs to Almighty God Himself.

CHAP. XII. The Sermon on the Mount, continued.

OUR blessed Lord next gave His disciples directions for almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. Take heed, He said to them, that you do not your justice before men, that you may be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward from your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honoured by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will repay

thee. And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, who love to pray standing in the synagogues and at the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men : Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret : and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will reward thee. And when you are praying, speak not much, as the heathens do : for they think that they are heard for their much speaking. Be not you, therefore, like them. For your Father knoweth what you stand in need of, before you ask Him. You, therefore, shall pray in this manner : Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. Amen. For if you forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will also forgive you your offences. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your sins. And when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad : for they disfigure their faces, that to men they may appear fasting. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face ; that thou appear not fasting to men, but to thy Father, who is in secret : and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will reward thee.

The first requisite in almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, is, that they be done for God's sake alone, and not out of regard to the favour of men. In giving our money to religious and charitable purposes, we are to give with such a pure intention to please God only, that it might be said that our left hand knows not what our right hand does. Not that it is necessary always literally to conceal our almsgiving. On the contrary, the precept that we are to make our light shine before men, enjoins us often to offer our gifts publicly. What is forbidden, both in giving alms, in prayer, and in mortifications, is, that the applause of men should be the object

at which we aim in what we do. Otherwise, we have indeed that reward which we seek, namely, the praise of men ; but the praise of God and eternal joys are lost to us for ever.

Thus, also, the command to pray in secret cannot possibly mean that we are *always* to pray in private ; nor can the forbidding of much speaking in prayer mean that long prayers are unlawful or never desirable. It is the heathen's notion, that the mere repetition of a quantity of words will draw down the gifts of God, which our Lord condemns. Prayer is the *asking* God for certain blessings. It is an act of the heart and the will ; and whether our desires are expressed in many words or few words,—whether we pray only for a few seconds, or (as our Saviour Himself did) continue all night in prayer,—must depend upon our circumstances and our powers. Our Lord reminds us that the Almighty knows beforehand what we need, and that we are not to look upon prayer as the giving information to God of what we desire, or the explaining our wants to Him at full length, as we explain them to our fellow-men. A few brief sentences, like the prayer which Jesus here gives us as a model to follow ; or even a few words, or a single motion of the heart towards God, is real prayer ; and when circumstances make it impossible for us to say or think more, will bring down on us the fulness of the blessing of Him who knows infinitely better what we have need of than we know ourselves. And thus a cheerful countenance and a natural, unaffected manner, are the proper accompaniments of fasting ; and not that gloomy aspect and carelessness in dress, which the Jewish hypocrites assumed, in order to shew to other men how severely they were afflicting themselves with their austerities. For all such pure spiritual service God will reward us abundantly. And therefore our blessed Lord said : Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth ; where the rust, and the moth consume, and where thieves dig through, and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven ; where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where

thieves do not dig through nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also. The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be simple, thy whole body will be lightsome. But if thy eye be evil, thy whole body shall be darksome. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great will the darkness itself be! No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon. Therefore I say to you: Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And which of you, by thinking, can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labour not, neither do they spin. And yet I say to you, that not even Solomon, in all his glory, was arrayed as one of these. Now, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathen seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God, and His justice; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not, therefore, solicitous for to-morrow: for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

By a simple eye, Jesus meant that purity of intention, without which all our good deeds are worthless, as all is dark to a blind man. The eye is our guide in all our movements; it is, as it were, the light within us; and when it is destroyed, we are dark without hope of seeing. And still further, a mixture of intention, partly given to God, and partly to the good things of the

world, which our Saviour describes by the word "mammon," is impossible. If our whole heart is not given to God, He regards us as His enemies. And to those whose whole souls are consecrated to God, all things are given. They are in the hands of the Lord; and as the flowers of the field, which perish, and are seen no more, are yet clothed with unequalled loveliness by their Creator's wisdom, how much more shall we, who are immortal souls, made by God, redeemed by God, sanctified by God, and called to dwell for ever in the presence of God, be blest with all gifts that are truly for our eternal benefit! Worldly cares are unfit for those who are heirs of immortality. The evil of each day is to be endured in peace, when it comes. By dwelling upon it beforehand, we neither prevent its approach, nor gain strength to bear it when it has come; we rather tempt ourselves to sin against God by murmuring, and complaining, and distrusting His fatherly care and love. Cheerfulness is the best preservative of godliness.

CHAP. XIII. The Sermon on the Mount, concluded.

OUR Lord next enjoined the duty of a merciful judgment of one another's conduct. Judge not, He said, that you may not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you again. And why seest thou a mote in thy brother's eye, and seest not a beam in thy own eye? Or how sayest thou to thy brother: Let me cast the mote out of thy eye; and behold, a beam is in thy own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. As we judge others, God will judge us. It is hateful in the sight of God to behold a sinner whose sins are so great that they may be likened to a beam of wood, forgetting his faults, and, uncalled for, reproving the defects of his fellow-creature, which, in

comparison to his own, are perhaps a mere mote, or splinter.

We are further to abstain from communicating sacred things to those who value them not. Give not that which is holy to dogs : neither cast ye your pearls before swine ; lest they trample them under their feet, and, turning upon you, tear you.

Then, lastly, Jesus gave still further instructions relative to prayer and the general course of a devout life. Ask, and it shall be given you : seek, and you shall find : knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth : and he that seeketh, findeth : and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, of whom if his son ask bread, will he reach him a stone ? Or if he ask a fish, will he reach him a serpent ? If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children ; how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him ? All things, therefore, whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them : for this is the law and the prophets. Enter ye in at the narrow gate : for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction ; and many there are who enter by it. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way, which leadeth to life ; and few there are who find it ! Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ? Even so every good tree yieldeth good fruit, and the bad tree yieldeth bad fruit. A good tree cannot yield bad fruit ; neither can a bad tree yield good fruit. Every tree that yieldeth not good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore, by their fruits you shall know them. Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven : but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many will say to Me in that day : Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name

cast out devils, and done many wonderful works in Thy name? And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity. Therefore, whosoever heareth these My words, and doeth them, shall be likened to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these My words, and doeth them not, shall be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall thereof.

We are to pray with unbounded confidence in the goodness of God, who is indeed our Father, and can never turn a deaf ear to our cries; for even mortal and sinful fathers do not mock their children when they entreat them for any earthly gift.

CHAP. XIV. Christ heals the Leper, and works other Miracles.

AND when He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him: and behold, a leper coming, adored Him, saying: Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth His hand, touched him, saying: I will. Be thou made clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him: See thou tell no man: but go, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony to them. This command our blessed Lord enjoined upon the leper, because it had been ordered by the law of Moses, that whenever a leper was healed he was to go to the priest, and shew that he was cured, and offer certain offerings in thanksgiving for the mercy granted to him.

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came to Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus said to him: I will come and heal him. And the centurion making answer,

said : Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof : but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I am myself both subject to the authority of others, and I have soldiers under my own command. I know what it is to obey and to be obeyed ; and that if Thou wilt but command that my servant shall be healed, the disease will leave him. And Jesus, when He heard this, turned to His disciples, and told them that He had not found in the whole people of Israel so great faith in His power, as He found in this heathen soldier. And He said to them : I say unto you, that many shall come from all parts of the world, and be inheritors of the blessings of salvation, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; while many of the posterity of Abraham, for their unbelief, shall be cast out into eternal torments. And He said to the centurion : Go ; and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour.

And He went into the city of Naim ; and when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother ; and she was a widow : and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said to her : Weep not. And He came near and touched the bier. (And they that carried it stood still.) And He said : Young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother. And Jesus, seeing great multitudes about Him, gave orders to pass over the water. As He was about to enter into the boat, two men came and offered to follow Him, to whom He replied by warning them of the perfect sacrifice of their own wills which they must make, if they would indeed be His disciples. One of these was a Scribe, who said to Jesus, Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou shalt go. And Jesus saith to him : The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests ; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head. If the Scribe was not prepared for poverty and hardship such as this, he could be no follower of Jesus Christ. The

other said to Him : Lord, permit me first to go, and bury my father. But Jesus said to him : Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead. The request of this man was in truth a mere pretence. His heart was with the world ; and therefore Jesus forbade him to do that which, in other circumstances, would have been a pious duty, bidding him leave the burial of his father to those who were dead to spiritual things.

And when He entered into the ship, His disciples followed Him : and behold, a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the ship was covered with waves : but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awaked Him, saying : Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them : Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith ? Then rising up, He commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying : Who is this, for even the winds and the sea obey Him ? And when He was come on the other side of the water, into the country of the Gerasens, there met Him two men possessed with devils, coming out of the sepulchres, exceeding fierce, so that no one could pass by that way. And behold, they cried out, saying : What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God ? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time ? And, not far from them, there was a herd of many swine feeding. And the devils besought Him, saying : If Thou cast us out hence, send us into the herd of swine. And He said to them : Go. And they, going out, went into the swine ; and behold, the whole herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that kept them, fled : and coming into the city, told every thing, and concerning them that had been possessed by the devils. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus : and when they saw Him, they besought Him that He would depart from their coasts. They cared not for His miracles, or His teaching, for their hearts were fixed on worldly goods, as appeared from their keeping swine, an animal which it was forbidden to the Jews to eat ; while their consciences told them that the miraculous loss of their

unlawful possessions was but a just punishment for their covetousness and disobedience to the law which they were bound to obey.

CHAP. XV. John sends Messengers to Jesus. Jesus is anointed by a woman who had been a sinner.

AND John's disciples told him of all these things. And John called to him two of his disciples, and sent them to Jesus, saying: Art Thou He who is to come; or expect we another? And when the men were come to Him, they said: John the Baptist hath sent us to Thee, saying: Art Thou He who is to come; or expect we another? (And in that same hour He cured many of their diseases and sores, and of evil spirits; and to many that were blind He gave sight.) And answering, He said to them: Go, and relate to John what you have heard and seen: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, to the poor the Gospel is preached. And blessed is he who is not scandalised in Me, but understands that these are in truth the works of God.

Then, when the messengers of John were departed, Jesus declared to the multitudes, that John was the prophet whose coming had been foretold by Malachias in the words, "Behold, I send My angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee." He taught them also, that though no mortal man as yet born was greater than John, yet so glorious would be the privileges of the Christian Church which He was about to establish, that the least in that new kingdom of God would be greater than the Baptist.

And the hearts of great numbers of the people opened, and they were baptised with John's baptism. But all these penitents were from the lowest and most despised of the people, and the haughty Pharisees and Scribes remained obstinate in their sins. And Jesus likened them to capricious and selfish children, whom nothing will please, because, when John came, living an austere life in the deserts, they said that he had a

devil; and when He Himself came, and lived as other men, and frequented the houses of many persons, they accused him of gluttony and wine-bibbing, and of being the friend of publicans and sinners.

Then He upbraided the cities where He had done His mighty works for their unbelief, and declared that even Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom should be less awfully punished in the day of judgment, than these proud cities of the Jews,—Corozain, Bethsaida, and Capharnaum. And He prayed to the eternal Father, and gave Him thanks for revealing the mysteries of His grace to those who were humble and simple as babes, while He hid them from the prudence and wisdom of this world. And one of the Pharisees desired Him to eat with him. And being entered into the house of the Pharisee, he sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, who was a sinner, when she knew that He sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment: and, standing behind at His feet, she began to wash His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. And the Pharisee who had invited Him, seeing it, spoke within himself, saying: This man, if He were a prophet, would know surely who and what kind of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering, said to him: Simon, I have something to say to thee. But he said: Master, say it. A certain creditor had two debtors, the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which, therefore, of the two loveth him most? Simon answering, said: I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And He said to him: Thou hast judged rightly. And, turning to the woman, He said to Simon, Dost thou see this woman? I entered into thy house; thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest Me no kiss: but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she with ointment hath anointed My

feet. Wherefore I say to thee, Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less. And He said to her: Thy sins are forgiven thee. And they that sat together at table began to say within themselves: Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And He said to the woman, Thy faith hath made thee safe: go in peace.

CHAP. XVI. Jesus instructs the people.

AND certain scribes came from Jerusalem, and said that Jesus worked His miracles by the assistance of Beelzebub. And Jesus replied to them that this could not be, because His miracles were wrought to destroy the power of the devil; and He bade them beware of sinning against the Holy Ghost, by imputing to Satan those wonders of mercy which were in truth the work of the Spirit of God.

Then in their impenitence, and notwithstanding all the proofs of His Divine authority which Jesus had already given, they asked for a fresh sign of heaven. But Jesus would give them no more, saying, that the only sign that should be granted should be His own resurrection from the dead, as the prophet Jonas had been cast forth after three days and nights from the belly of the whale. And He declared that the last end of these unbelievers should be like that of a man from whom a devil has been cast out, and who suffers him again to return with seven other spirits more wicked than himself.

And as He was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and His brethren stood without, seeking to speak to Him. And one said to Him: Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, seeking Thee. But He, answering him that told Him, said: Who is My mother, and who are My brethren? And stretching forth His hand towards His disciples, He said: Behold My mother and My brethren. For who-

soever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother.

And when great multitudes stood about Him, so that they trod one upon another, He began to say to His disciples: Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed: nor hidden, that shall not be known. For whatsoever things you have spoken in darkness, shall be published in the light: and that which you have spoken in the ear in the chambers, shall be proclaimed on the house-tops. And I say to you, my friends: Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will shew you whom ye shall fear: fear ye Him who after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear Him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore: you are of more value than many sparrows. And I say to you: Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. But he that shall deny Me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.

And He said to them: Take heed and beware of all covetousness: for a man's life doth not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth. And He spoke a similitude to them, saying: The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits: and he thought within himself, saying: What shall I do, because I have not where to lay up together my fruits? And he said: This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and will build greater: and into them will I gather all things that are grown to me, and my goods. And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer. But God said to him: Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee: and whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God. And He said to His disciples: There-

fore I say to you : Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat ; nor for your body, what you shall put on. The life is more than the food, and the body is more than the raiment. Consider the ravens, for they do not sow, nor do they reap, neither have they storehouse, nor barn, and God feedeth them. How much are you more valuable than they ! And which of you by thinking can add to his stature one cubit ? If, then, you are not able to do even the least thing, why are you solicitous for the rest ? Consider the lilies, how they grow : they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you : Not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these. Now if God clothe in this manner the grass that is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven : how much more you, O ye of little faith ! And seek not you what you shall eat, or what you shall drink : and be not lifted up on high : for all these things do the nations of the earth seek after. But your Father knoweth that you have need of these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice : and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom. Sell what you possess, and give alms. Make to yourselves bags which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not : where the thief approacheth not, nor the moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded, and lamps burning in your hands, and you yourselves like to men who wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding : that when he cometh, and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Amen I say to you, that he will gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister to them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or if he shall come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But this know ye, that if the master of the family knew at what hour the thief would come, he would surely watch, and

would not suffer his house to be broke open. Be you also ready : for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.

CHAP. XVII. The parables of the Sower, of the Wheat and Cockle, of the Hidden Treasure, the Pearl, and the Net.

AND when a very great multitude was gathered together, and hastened out of the cities to Him, He spoke by a similitude : A sower went out to sow his seed : and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it : and some fell upon a rock, and, as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture : and some fell among thorns, and the thorns, growing up with it, choked it : and some fell upon good ground, and sprung up, and yielded fruit a hundredfold. Saying these things he cried out : He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And His disciples asked Him what the parable meant. And He said, that to them was given to understand the mysterious things which belonged to the kingdom of God ; but that those who would not follow Him must hear His parables only, without being taught their signification. For it is the will of God, that those who employ well what God bestows upon them receive fresh gifts and instruction, while they who remain away from Christ are rather hardened by the mysterious words He utters to them.

And this was the interpretation He gave to His disciples of the parable of the sower. The seed is the word of God. And they by the wayside are they that hear : then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest, believing, they should be saved. Now, they upon the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy : and these have no roots ; who believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they who have heard, and, going their way, are choked with the

cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.

And He spoke another parable, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came, and oversowed cockle among the wheat; and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. Then the servants of the master of the house came, and said to him: Master, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? from whence, then, hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No; lest, while ye gather up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Let both grow until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn; but gather the wheat into my barn.

Another parable He proposed to them, saying: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which, indeed, is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown up, it is greater than any herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof. Another parable He spoke to them: The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.

All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitude: and without parables He did not speak to them. That the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: I will open my mouth in parables: I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world. Then, having sent away the multitudes, He came into the house; and His disciples came to Him, saying: Explain to us the parable of the cockle of the field. He made answer, and said to them: He that

soweth the good seed is the Son of man. And the field is the world. And the good seed are the children of the kingdom, and the cockle are the children of the wicked one. And the enemy that sowed them is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world. And the reapers are the angels. Even as cockle, therefore, is gathered up, and burnt with fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of man shall send his angels: and they shall gather out of His kingdom all scandals, and them that work iniquity; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

By the parables of the mustard-seed and the leaven Jesus shewed how wonderfully His Church should hereafter grow from the smallest beginning, till it overshadowed the world, and changed all things among men. He also likened the blessings of His Church to a hidden treasure, and to a costly pearl, which was to be purchased at the price of all earthly possessions; and to a net cast by fishermen into the sea, which gathered together fish of all kinds, bad and good, to be separated when drawn ashore, as the evil and the good will be separated by the angels at the last day.

CHAP. XVIII. Jesus in Matthew's house. He sends forth the twelve Apostles.

AND Matthew made a feast for Jesus in his house, and many publicans and others sat down with them. And the Pharisees seeing it, said to His disciples: Why doth your Master eat with publicans and sinners? But Jesus hearing it, said: They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are sick.

Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying: Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Thy disciples do not fast? And He answered them, that His followers were to observe a due season in their fastings

and mournings. When He, who was the bridegroom, was gone, then were they to fast and sorrow, but not till then, otherwise they would be like men who mended a worn-out garment with a piece of new cloth, whose strength would tear the old material, and make the rent but worse. Or they would be as those who put strong new wine into old leathern bottles, which burst with the working of liquor.

As He was speaking these things to them, behold, a certain ruler came, and adored Him, saying: Lord, my daughter is just now dead: but come, lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus rising up, followed him with His disciples. And behold, a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment. For she said, within herself: If I shall but touch His garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus turning about, and seeing her, said: Take courage, daughter: thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the crowd making a rout, He said: Give place: for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed at Him. And when the crowd was turned out, He went in, and took her by the hand: and the girl arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country.

And as Jesus was departing from thence, there followed him two blind men, crying out, and saying: Son of David, have mercy on us. And when He was come to the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus saith to them: Do you believe that I can do this unto you? They say to Him, Yea, Lord. Then He touched their eyes, saying: According to your faith, be it done unto you. And their eyes were opened: and Jesus strictly charged them, saying: See that no man know it. But they, going out, spread His fame abroad in all that country. And when they were gone out, behold, they brought to Him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And the devil being cast out, the dumb man spoke, and the multitude wondered, saying: The like

was never seen in Israel, But the Pharisees said: He casteth out devils, by the prince of devils.

And He came into His own country, and taught them in their synagogues, so that they wondered, and said: How came this man by this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? and His brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Jude? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Whence, then, hath He all these things? And they were scandalised in His regard. But Jesus said to them: A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And He wrought not many miracles there, because of their unbelief.

Then He called together the twelve Apostles, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And He said to them: Take nothing for your journey; neither staff, nor scrip, nor bread, nor money; neither have two coats. And whatsoever house you shall enter into, abide there, and depart not from thence. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off even the dust of your feet for a testimony against them. And He sent them to preach to the Jews alone, forbidding them to preach either to the Samaritans or the Gentiles. And they went forth, and preached the Gospel from city to city, healing diseases, and casting out devils, wheresoever they came.

CHAP. XIX. The death of John Baptist. The first miracle of the loaves. Jesus walks upon the sea.

WHEN King Herod's servants heard of the miracles of Jesus, they supposed that He must be one of the old prophets returned to this world. But Herod imagined that it must be John Baptist risen from the dead, who was working these mighty works. For he had himself but just now murdered the Baptist on his own birthday.

He had made a great feast for his nobles and officers ; and the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and she pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised, with an oath, to give her whatsoever she would ask of him. But she, being instructed before by her mother, said : Give me here in a dish the head of John the Baptist. And the king was struck sad : yet because of his oath, and for them that sat with him at table, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a dish : and it was given to the damsel : and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came and took the body, and buried it ; and came and told Jesus.

Jesus then retired from thence in a boat into a desert place apart : and the people having heard of it, followed Him on foot out of the cities. And He coming forth saw a great multitude, and had compassion on them, and healed their sick. And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying : This is a desert place, and the hour is now past : send away the multitudes, that, going into the town, they may buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said to them : They have no need to go : give you them to eat. They answered Him : We have here but five loaves and two fishes. He said to them : Bring them hither to Me. And when they had commanded the multitude to sit down upon the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fishes : and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up what remained, twelve baskets full of fragments. And the number of them that had eaten was five thousand men, besides women and children. And forthwith Jesus obliged His disciples to get up into the ship, and to go before Him over the water, while He sent the people away.

And He dismissed the multitude, and went up into a mountain alone to pray. And when the evening was come He was there alone. But the ship in the midst of the sea was tossed with the waves : for the wind was

contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them walking upon the sea. And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying: it is an apparition. And they cried out for fear. And immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying: Be of good heart: it is I; be not afraid. And Peter making answer, said: Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters. And He said: Come. And Peter going down out of the ship, walked upon the water to come to Jesus. But seeing the wind strong, he was afraid: and when he began to sink, he cried out, saying: Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretching forth His hand, took hold of him and said to him: O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying: Thou art truly the Son of God. And when they were gone over, they came into the country of Genesar. And when the men of that place had knowledge of Him, they sent out into all that country, and brought to Him all that were diseased. And they besought Him that they might touch but the hem of His garment. And as many as touched, were made whole.

CHAP. XX. The discourse at Capharnaum. The miracles of the Girl possessed, and of the deaf and dumb Man.

THE day following a large number of the people took ship, and came to Jesus at Capharnaum. And Jesus reproached them for seeking Him, not for the sake of spiritual, but carnal food; and bade them rather labour for the meat that never perishes. And they asked for a fresh miracle, their hearts being still untouched by the wonders He had already wrought. Their fathers, they said, had seen the miracle of the manna, and had eaten it. And Jesus told them that He Himself was the living manna, the true bread that came down from heaven. But they murmured at His words, supposing Him to be a mere man, born of Joseph as well as Mary. And

when still further He said, The bread that I will give is My flesh, they argued with one another, and declared it was impossible. But again He said, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you.

And when they were more and more amazed, He did but repeat His words, declaring that it *was* a hard saying; yet God would find a way by which it should be possible for them actually to eat His flesh and drink His blood. Nevertheless, even many of His disciples would not believe Him, and from that time forth deserted Him.

Then He said to the twelve, Will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed, and have known that Thou art the Christ the Son of God. Jesus answered them: Have not I chosen you twelve? and of you one is a devil. Now He meant Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: for this same was about to betray Him; whereas he was one of the twelve.

After this Jesus returned to Galilee, because the Jews in Jewry were seeking to kill Him, and the hour appointed by Almighty God for His death was not yet come. First, however, He went for a short time, perhaps in order to escape from Herod, who ruled over Galilee, to the sea-coasts of Tyre and Sidon. There He wrought a miracle, contrary to His general rule, upon a woman who was not of the Jewish race; because her faith in His love and power were great indeed. She came to Him and cried: Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying: Send her away, for she crieth after us. And He answering, said: I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel. But she came and worshipped Him, saying: Lord, help me. But He answered, and said: It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to cast it to the dogs. And she said: Yea, Lord: for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their

masters. Then Jesus, answering, said to her : O woman, great is thy faith : be it done to thee as thou wilt. And her daughter was cured from that hour.

On His way back to Galilee, passing through Decapolis, a deaf and dumb man was brought to Him to be healed. And taking him aside from the multitude, He put His fingers into his ears ; and spitting, He touched his tongue ; and looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him : Ephpheta, that is, Be opened. And immediately his ears were opened ; and the string of his tongue was loosed ; and he spoke right. And He charged them that they should tell no man. But the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it. And so much the more did they wonder, saying : He hath done all things well ; He hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

CHAP. XXI. The second miracle of the loaves. Peter confesses Jesus to be the Christ.

IN those days again, when there was a great multitude, and had nothing to eat ; calling His disciples together, He saith to them : I have compassion on the multitude : for, behold, they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat : and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint in the way : for some of them came from afar off. And His disciples answered Him : From whence can any one satisfy them here with bread in the wilderness ? And He asked them : How many loaves have ye ? and they said : Seven. And He commanded the people to sit down on the ground : and taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, He broke, and gave to His disciples to set before them ; and they sat them before the people. And they had a few little fishes : and He blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them. And they did eat, and were filled : and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand : and He sent them away.

And they came to Bethsaida: and they bring to Him a blind man: and they besought Him to touch him. And taking the blind man by the hand, He led him out of the town: and spitting upon his eyes, laying His hands on him, He asked him if he saw any thing. And looking up, he said: I see men as trees, walking. After that He laid His hands again upon his eyes; and he began to see, and was restored, so that he saw all things clearly. And He sent him to his house, saying: Go into thy house; and if thou enter into the town, tell no man.

Journeying onwards, Jesus reached Cæsarea Philippi; and He asked His disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the Son of man is? And they said: Some say that Thou art John the Baptist, and others Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith to them: But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answering, said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say unto thee, That thou art a Rock (or, in the English tongue, "Peter"), and upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven. Then He charged His disciples, that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

From this time Jesus began to unfold to His disciples the mystery of His death and passion. Until now they scarcely understood that He was not to be a worldly monarch, but was to conquer sin by His own sufferings and death. But the hour was drawing near, when He would go to Jerusalem, to meet the death which there awaited Him. And when He foretold His death and resurrection, Peter was amazed and angry, and said, Lord, be it far from Thee; this shall not be unto Thee. And Jesus turned to him, and bade him

cease his words ; for he was acting the part of an adversary, tempting Him to fly from that death which He had come into the world to endure.

Then He said to His disciples : If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it : and he that shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it. For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels : and then will He render to every man according to his works.

CHAP. XXII. The Transfiguration. The lunatic healed.
Jesus pays tribute.

THE hour was now come when God was about to display the hidden glory which lay concealed beneath the humble form of Jesus before His chosen disciples. Peter, James, and John, were ever the three who, both at this time and others, were favoured with a more intimate knowledge of the mysteries of redemption than was as yet granted to any others. Peter was to be the Rock on which the Church of Christ was to be built, James was to be its first martyr, John was the disciple whom Jesus most loved ; and these three were now taken up into a high mountain by their Master, and they beheld Him for awhile glorified with more than earthly brightness. He was transfigured before them. And His face did shine as the sun : and His garments became white as snow. And, behold, there appeared to them Moses, and Elias talking with Him. Then Peter, answering, said to Jesus : Lord, it is good for us to be here : if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And, behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying : This is My beloved Son, in whom I am

well pleased : hear ye Him. And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came, and touched them ; and said to them : Arise, and be not afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, but only Jesus, And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying : Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead.

Then they asked Him how His triumph could be so near, when Elias, who was to come again upon earth, according to the prophecies, had not appeared. And Jesus said that Elias had indeed come, and been put to death. And they understood that John Baptist was the Elias spoken of by the prophet.

And when He was come down from the mountain, He found a multitude gathered together with the rest of His disciples, and a lunatic whom the disciples had tried in vain to cure. And Jesus told them that it was because of their want of faith in the divine power He had granted them, which they must seek by prayer and fasting, that they had been unable to cast out the devil. Then He rebuked the devil, and the child was healed.

Coming then to Capharnaum, the tribute-gatherers asked for the tribute which the government exacted from all the people. And Jesus shewed to His disciples that He, being no true servant of the kings of the earth, was bound to pay no tribute to them. Nevertheless, that He might not prejudice the people against His doctrine, He bade Peter go to the sea, and cast in a hook, and open the mouth of the first fish he caught, and with a piece of money which he there would find, pay the tribute that was demanded.

CHAP. XXIII. Jesus teaches humility, and to beware of giving scandal, and to forgive offences.

ABOUT this time the disciples came to Jesus, saying : Who, thinkest Thou, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven ? And Jesus calling unto Him a little child, set

him in the midst of them, and said: Amen I say unto you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And he that shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me.

Then He warned them against putting scandals or temptations in the way of these little ones, or of any man whatsoever. He bade them cast away the dearest blessings they possessed, even though they loved them as their own eyes, or hands, or feet, rather than suffer these things to lead them to sin, and thus to plunge them into hell fire. See that you despise not, He said, one of these little ones: for I say to you, that their Angels in heaven always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. What think you? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray; doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains, and go to seek that which is gone astray? And if it be so that he find it, amen I say to you, he rejoiceth more for that than for the ninety-nine that went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father, who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

Then again He gave authority to His disciples to forgive sins, and to refuse forgiveness to the impenitent; and with a parable taught Peter that we are to forgive one another all our offences. Peter came to Him, and said: Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus said to him: I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him, that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, let him go, and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence, and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. Now his fellow-servants seeing what was done, were very much grieved: and they came, and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me. Shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers, until he should pay all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

In this parable the king represents Almighty God; the debt of ten thousand talents, which is equal to about two million pounds sterling, the multitude and enormity of our sins against God: while the hundred pence represents the sins of our neighbour against us, which in comparison with our offences against God are nothing. And as the cruel servant was cast into prison till he should pay his immense debt, which, indeed, he could *never* pay, so is the unforgiving soul cast into the eternal torments of hell.

CHAP. XXIV. Jesus goes to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles. The mission of the Seventy-two.

OUR blessed Lord now finally left Galilee, and went to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. At this festival, which was kept in the month of October, the people left their ordinary houses, and dwelt for eight days in booths or tents, or—as they are also called—tabernacles, to commemorate the time when they had dwelt in tents in the wilderness.

Passing through Samaria, in one village the inhabitants refused to receive Him, because He was journeying towards Jerusalem, the Samaritans being ever at enmity with the Jews. And the disciples James and John were roused to anger, and asked to be allowed to call down fire from heaven upon the guilty place. But Jesus forbade them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

After this, Jesus chose out seventy-two of His disciples, and gave them a commission to preach the Gospel, sending them out two and two, in perfect poverty, depending upon the gifts of those to whom they preached for their support.

And as He journeyed on towards Jerusalem, at the entrance of a certain town there met Him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off: and they lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, master, have mercy on us. And when He saw them, He said: Go, shew yourselves to the priests; for thus it was ordered in the law of Moses in the case of persons who were healed of the leprosy. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was cleansed, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell on his face before His feet, giving thanks: and this man was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said: Were there not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return, and give glory to God, but this stranger. And He said to him: Arise, go thy way: for thy faith hath made thee whole.

When He reached Jerusalem, there was a great excitement among the people respecting Him. Many wondered, and believed Him to come from God; others treated Him as a deceiver, and charged Him with breaking the Sabbath, because He healed the sick on the Sabbath-day. On the last day of the feast of tabernacles, when it was the custom to fetch water from the pool of Siloam with great rejoicings to pour upon the altar, He stood and cried aloud to the people, If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that

believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. And this He spoke of the Holy Spirit, who would be given in all its fulness to His disciples after He Himself should be risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven. The chief priests and Pharisees also sought to seize Him, abhorring His teaching, and jealous of His authority with the people: but His hour was not yet come. And when the feast was ended, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

CHAP. XXV. The Woman taken in adultery. The Jews seek to stone Jesus.

AND early in the morning, He came again into the temple: and all the people came to Him, and sitting He taught them. And the Scribes and Pharisees bring to Him a woman taken in adultery; and they set her in the midst, and said to Him: Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery. Now Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest Thou? And this they said, tempting Him, that they might accuse Him. But Jesus, stooping down, wrote with His finger on the ground. And when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself and said to them: He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. But they, hearing this, went out one by one, beginning from the eldest: and Jesus alone remained, and the woman standing in the midst. Then Jesus lifting up Himself, said to her: Woman, where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee? And she said: No man, Lord. And Jesus said: Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more. For He knew that this woman, though a great sinner, was now penitent, and that her accusers had sought only to bring Him into difficulties, by leading Him to say that she ought to be put to death, while the Romans never suffered the Jews to put any to death by their own authority.

And as He went on condemning the unbelieving Jews for their hypocrisy, in calling themselves Abraham's children, while they did the deeds of the devil, they were the more enraged. And He said to them : If a man keep My word, he shall not see death for ever. The Jews, therefore, said : Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets : and Thou sayest : If any man keep My word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead ? and the prophets are dead. Whom dost Thou make Thyself ? Jesus answered : If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing : it is My Father that glorifieth Me, of whom you say that He is your God. And you have not known Him : but I know Him : and if I should say that I know Him not, I should be like to you, a liar. But I know Him, and keep His word. Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see My day : he saw it, and was glad. The Jews then said to Him : Thou art not yet fifty years old ; and hast Thou seen Abraham ? Jesus saith to them, Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. He called Himself by the incommunicable title, I am, which belongs to the Eternal God alone, because He was Himself co-eternal and co-equal with the Father. But the heart of the Jews was hardened, and they charged Him with blasphemy, and would have stoned Him, but He miraculously passed through the midst of them, and departed from the temple.

CHAP. XXVI. The Parable of the good Samaritan. Martha and Mary. Jesus teaches His disciples to pray. The Seventy-two return.

AFTER this a certain lawyer thought to confound Jesus, by asking questions which He could not answer. He said to Him, Master, what must I do to possess eternal life ? But He said to him : What is written in the law ? how readeest thou ? He answering said : Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy

mind ; and thy neighbour as thyself. And He said to him : Thou hast answered right : this do, and thou shalt live.

But the lawyer, wishing to excuse his own disobedience to the law which he already knew, professed that he did not know who were to be called his neighbours. And Jesus answering, said : A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead. And it happened that a certain priest went down the same way : and seeing him, he passed by. In like manner, also, a Levite, when he was near the place, and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him : and seeing him, was moved with compassion ; and going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine : and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said : Take care of him ; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee. Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbour to him that fell among the robbers ? But he said : He that shewed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him : Go, and do thou in like manner.

Jesus now visited Bethania, a village near Jerusalem, and here dwelt two women, Martha and Mary, with their brother Lazarus. With these He stayed awhile, Mary seating herself at Jesus' feet, and listening to his instruction, while Martha busied herself about preparing the supper, on which she was so much occupied, that she cared little for the spiritual food which her sister sought for. At length she came to Jesus, and said, Lord, hast Thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve ? speak to her, therefore, that she help me. And the Lord answering, said to her : Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her. Not that Martha's conduct was in itself wrong, but that

her mind was too completely taken up with her worldly duties ; while Mary, who was not compelled by duty to busy herself in her household, did well in giving her whole thoughts to the words of Him who vouchsafed to visit her.

And it came to pass that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of his disciples said to Him : Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And He said to them : When you pray, say : Father, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins : for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.

And He said to them : Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him : Friend, lend me three loaves : for a friend of mine is come off his journey to me, and I have nothing to set before him. And he from within shall answer and say : Trouble me not : the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed ; I cannot rise and give thee. Yet, if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth. And I say to you : Ask, and it shall be given you : seek, and you shall find : knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth : and he that seeketh, findeth : and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. And which of you, if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone ? or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent ? or if he shall ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion ? If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him ?

And the seventy-two returned with joy, saying : Lord, the devils also are subject to us in thy name. And He said to them : I saw Satan as lightning falling from heaven. Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents, and scorpions, and upon all the power

of the enemy: and nothing shall hurt you. But yet rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you: but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven. In that same hour He rejoiced in the Holy Ghost, and said: I give thanks to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father: because so it hath pleased Thee. All things are delivered to Me by My Father: and no one knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and to whom the Son will reveal Him. And turning to His disciples, He said: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them.

CHAP. XXVII. A man born blind healed on the Sabbath.

AND as Jesus was walking, He saw a man who was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him: Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? For they supposed that if this blindness was not a punishment for his parents' sins, he must have existed in some former state, and there committed the sins for which he was now chastised. But Jesus answered: Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent Me, whilst it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When He had said these things, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes: and said to him: Go, wash in the pool of Siloe (which is interpreted, Sent). He went, therefore, and washed; and he came seeing.

The neighbours, therefore, and they who had seen

him before that he was a beggar, said: Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said: This is he. And others: No, but he is like him. But he said: I am he. They said, therefore, to him: How were thy eyes opened? He answered: That man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me: Go to the pool of Siloe, and wash. And I went, I washed, and I see. And they said to him: Where is he? He saith: I know not. They bring him that had been blind to the Pharisees. Now it was the sabbath when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Again, therefore, the Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight. But he said to them: He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and I see. Some, therefore, of the Pharisees said: This man is not of God, who keepeth not the sabbath. But others said: How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say, therefore, to the blind man again: What sayest thou of him that hath opened thy eyes? And he said: He is a prophet. The Jews then did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight, and asked them, saying: Is this your son, whom you say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them, and said: We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but how he now seeth, we know not: or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: ask himself: he is of age; let him speak for himself.

These things his parents said, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had already agreed among themselves, that if any man should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore did his parents say: He is of age; ask himself. They, therefore, called the man again that had been blind, and said to him: Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner. He said then to them: If he be a sinner, I know not: one thing I know; that whereas I was blind, I now see. Then they said to him: What did he to thee? How did he open thy eyes? He

answered them : I have told you already, and you have heard : why would you hear it again ? will you also become his disciples ? They reviled him, therefore, and said : Be thou his disciple : but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses : but as to this man, we know not from whence he is. The man answered, and said to them : For in this is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence he is, and he hath opened my eyes : now we know that God doth not hear sinners : but if a man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard, that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God, he could not do any thing. They answered, and said to him : Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us ? And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out : and when He had found him, He said to him : Dost thou believe in the Son of God ? He answered, and said : Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him ? And Jesus said to him : Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He who talketh with thee. And he said : I believe, Lord. And falling down, he adored Him.

CHAP. XXVIII. The raising of Lazarus.

AFTER these things, Jesus taught the people that He alone was their Master, and that He alone would shew that He was the good Shepherd, because He would lay down His life for them. And as He declared that He and His Father were one, the Jews again sought to stone Him, but He escaped their hands, and crossed the river Jordan to Bethabara, and there for a while remained.

While He was there, Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, fell grievously sick. And his sisters sent to Jesus, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. And Jesus hearing it, said to them : This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God : that the Son of God may be glorified by it. Now Jesus

loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus. When He had heard, therefore, that he was sick, He still remained in the same place two days. And after that He said to His disciples: Our friend Lazarus sleepeth: but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. His disciples, therefore, said: Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. But Jesus spoke of his death: and they thought that He spoke of the repose of sleep. Then, therefore, Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead: and I am glad, for your sake, that I was not there, that you may believe: but let us go to him. Then Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples: Let us also go, that we may die with him. So Jesus came; and found that he had been four days already in the grave.

And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Martha, therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet him: but Mary sat at home. And Martha said to Jesus: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died: but now also I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee. Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to Him: I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her: I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live: and every one that liveth, and believeth in Me, shall not die for ever. Believest thou this? She saith to Him: Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world. And when she had said these things, she went, and called her sister Mary secretly, saying: The Master is come, and calleth for thee. She, as soon as she heard this, riseth quickly, and cometh to Him. For Jesus was not yet come into the town: but He was still in that place where Martha had met Him. The Jews, therefore, who were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up speedily and went out, followed her, saying: She goeth to the sepulchre to weep there. When Mary, therefore, was come where

Jesus was, seeing Him, she fell down at His feet, and saith to Him : Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

When Jesus, therefore, saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit, and troubled Himself, and said : Where have you laid him ? They say to Him : Lord, come and see. And Jesus wept. The Jews, therefore, said : Behold how He loved him. But some of them said : Could not He that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that this man should not die ? Jesus, therefore, again groaning in Himself, cometh to the sepulchre : now it was a cave : and a stone was laid over it. Jesus saith : Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him : Lord, by this time he stinketh ; for he is now of four days. Jesus saith to her : Did I not say to thee, that if thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God ? They took, therefore, the stone away. And Jesus lifting up His eyes, said : Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always ; but because of the people, who stand about, have I said it ; that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me. When He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice : Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding-bands, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them : Loose him, and let him go.

Many, therefore, of the Jews, who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went to the Pharisees, and told them the things that Jesus had done. The chief priests, therefore, and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said : What do we, for this man doeth many miracles ? If we let Him alone so, all men will believe in Him : and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation. But one of them, named Caiphas, being the high-priest of that year, said to them : You know nothing at all. Neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should

die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this he spoke not of himself: but being the high priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation; and not only for the nation, but to gather together in one the children of God, that were dispersed. From that day, therefore, they devised to put Him to death.

CHAP. XXIX. Jesus heals on the Sabbath-day. He teaches humility and the love of God to sinners.

ON a certain sabbath-day Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues; and there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years: and she was bent down, and could not look upwards at all. And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said to her: Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity. And He laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue, being angry that Jesus had healed on the sabbath, answering, said to the multitude: There are six days wherein you ought to work: in them therefore come, and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day. And the Lord answering him, said: Ye hypocrites, doth not every one of you on the sabbath-day loose his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead them to water? And ought not this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day? And when He said these things, all His adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the things that were gloriously done by Him.

And a certain man asked Him if there would be few who would be saved. And Jesus bade him strive with all his powers for salvation, because the gate to heaven is narrow, and few enter therein. And He declared, that in the last awful day, multitudes from the Gentiles should appear among the elect, and enter into heaven with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while so many of the Jews,

who boasted of being Abraham's children, were cast out for ever. And He cried to the city Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy children, as the bird doth her brood under her wings, and thou wouldst not? Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate.

And it came to pass when Jesus went into the house of a certain prince of the Pharisees on the sabbath-day to eat bread, that they were watching Him. And behold, there was a certain man before Him that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day? But they held their peace. But He taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, He said: Which of you whose ass or his ox shall fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the sabbath-day? And they could not answer Him to these things.

Then He taught them humility by a parable addressed to persons invited to a feast, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them: When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the highest place, lest perhaps one more honourable than thou be invited by him: and he who invited thee and him come and say to thee: Give place to this man; and then thou begin with blushing to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place: that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee: Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee. Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

And there went great multitudes with Him: and turning, He said to them: If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. Not meaning that we are really to hate our friends and kindred, but that our love to them is to be as nothing when compared with our love to Christ; and that every earthly affection and duty, and even life

itself, is to be given up, when it opposes that which is the will of God. For there is no way to follow Christ but by willingly enduring, for His sake, all those sufferings which are to us like that cross on which He died.

And in other parables He taught them with what love He himself sought their salvation, and what joy there is among the angels in heaven when sinners are converted. The Pharisees were murmuring against Him for receiving the publicans and sinners who flocked to hear Him, and He reproved them, saying, What man is there that hath a hundred sheep, who if he shall lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, doth he not lay it upon his shoulders, rejoicing; and, coming home, call together his friends and neighbours, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost? I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance. Or what woman, having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost. So, I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.

CHAP. XXX. The Parable of the Prodigal Son.

IN another parable Jesus also taught them the great mercy of God to the penitent sinner. A certain man, He said, had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger son gathering all together, went abroad into a far country, and there wasted his substance by living riotously.

And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want. And he went, and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm, to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And returning to himself, he said: How many hired servants in my father's house have plenty of bread, and I here perish with hunger? I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not now worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And, rising up, he went to his father. And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and, running to him, fell upon his neck, and kissed him. And the son said to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee: I am not now worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry: because this my son was dead, and is come to life again: he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and when he came, and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing: and he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said to him: Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe. And he was angry, and would not go in. His father, therefore, coming out, began to entreat him. And he answering, said to his father: Behold, for so many years I serve thee, and I have never transgressed thy commandment; and yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son is come, who hath devoured his substance with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. But he said to him: Son, thou art always with me; and all I have is thine. But it was fit that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy

brother was dead, and is come to life again : he was lost and is found.

Such is the goodness of God to those who, having been made His children by baptism, when they grow up leave their father's house for the sinful enjoyments of the world (which are at the best but like the husks which are the food of swine), and falling into mortal sin, afterwards repent and humble themselves, and seek readmission to the home they have deserted. In the sacrament of penance, God as it were embraces them and falls on their neck, and clothes them with that grace which is the necessary garment of all His faithful children ; and though, like the elder brother of the prodigal, some who have never fallen away are foolish and selfish enough to murmur, there is joy over their reception both among the saints on earth and among the angels and saints in heaven.

CHAP. XXXI. The Unjust Steward. The Rich Man and Lazarus.

AND Jesus said also to His disciples : There was a certain rich man, who had a steward : and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him : What is this I hear of thee ? give an account of thy stewardship : for now thou canst not be steward. And the steward said within himself : What shall I do, for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship ? To dig I am not able : to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. Therefore, calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first : How much dost thou owe my lord ? But he said : A hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him : Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another : And how much dost thou owe ? Who said : A hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him : Take thy bill, and write eighty. And the lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely : for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the

children of light. And I say to you: Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity; that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.

And thus our Lord teaches us, not to imitate the dishonesty of this steward, but only his wisdom in employing the good things of this world so as best to secure the object he aimed at. He aimed at worldly prosperity, and therefore tried to make friends of his master's debtors, by suffering them to cheat his master of a part of the goods they owed him. We aim at eternal happiness, and it is for us to use the wealth which God has put into our hands in such a way, that though to the ungodly it is a mammon of iniquity, to us it may be the means of securing an increase in our reward in heaven. To employ riches for our own pleasure only, and at the same time to serve God, is impossible. No servant, says our Lord, can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or he will hold to the one, and despise the other: you cannot serve God and mammon.

And then, in another parable, Jesus taught them the end of all these things, and the last state of the ungodly rich and the devout poor. There was a certain rich man, He said, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, by name Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; and no one did give him: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell. And, lifting up his eyes, when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. And Abraham said to him: Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil

things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And, besides all this, between us and you there is fixed a great chaos: so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot, nor from thence come hither. And he said: Then, Father, I beseech thee that thou wouldst send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren: that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torments. And Abraham said to him: They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them. But he said: No, father Abraham: but if one went to them from the dead, they will do penance. And he said to him: If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead.

Thus we learn, not only how impossible it is that our state should be changed, when once the moment of death is passed, but how vain it is to look for the miraculous conversion of those who resist the ordinary instruction which God gives by His appointed ministers. And thus it was with the Jews who heard our Lord's words. Even when He Himself did rise from the dead, they hardened themselves in their unbelief, as obstinately as while they had received only the warnings in the writings of Moses and the prophets.

CHAP. XXXII. The Pharisee and the Publican. It is hard for the rich to be saved. The Labourers in the Vineyard.

THEN Jesus taught His disciples to beware of causing scandals to weak believers, that is, of doing anything needlessly which might cause them to sin. And He bade them never grow weary in forgiving those who sinned against them, and afterwards repented. And the Pharisees began to question him as to the signs by which they might know when the last great day was at hand. And He said to them that it would come as swiftly as the lightning darts from one end of the heavens to the other, while the affairs of this life are going on, just as the flood came in the days of Noah, and Sodom was destroyed in the days of Lot.

And to some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others, He spoke also this parable: Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor such as this publican. I fast twice in the week: I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift his eyes towards heaven; but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.

Then the Pharisees came, and sought to entrap him into saying something against the law of Moses, asking him whether a man might be divorced from his wife, which was allowed in certain cases by the Mosaic law. Jesus answered, that God had made a man and his wife to be one flesh, and that, though for adultery they might be separated, yet neither party might marry again while the other lived. The permission to marry again which Moses had given, was because of the hardness of heart of the Jews, and because they had not received those Christian gifts of grace which, under the Gospel, would enable men to overcome the most violent of temptations.

Then were little children presented to Him, that He should lay His hands upon them, and pray. And the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said to them: Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to Me: for the kingdom of heaven is for such. And when He had laid His hands upon them, He departed thence.

And a certain ruler asked Him, What shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said: Thou knowest the commandments: Thou shalt not kill: Thou shalt not commit adultery: Thou shalt not steal: Thou shalt not bear false witness: Honour thy father and thy mother. And he said: All these I have kept from my youth. Now when Jesus had heard this, He said to him: Yet one thing is wanting to thee: sell all that thou hast,

and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me. He, having heard these things, was sorrowful: for he was very rich. Not that our blessed Lord meant that it is the duty of every Christian actually to sell all his goods, and give the produce to the poor; though it is the duty of every one to be ready to do this, when Almighty God calls him to the sacrifice. In the case of this ruler, Jesus, knowing his heart, gave him that command which would try his sincerity to the root; and when he was tried, he was found wanting. *Whatever* be our vocation, whether to serve God in riches or in poverty, married or single, as laymen, priests, or in the monastic life, it is for us to take heed that we obey the voice of Jesus, to whatsoever He may call us.

And Jesus, seeing the ruler depart in sorrow, said: How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God. For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said: Who, then, can be saved? He said to them: The things that are impossible with men, are possible with God. What is utterly impossible to nature, is even easy under the influence of the grace of Jesus Christ.

And Peter said: Behold, we have left all things, and have followed Thee. And He said to them: Amen I say to you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive much more in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting. But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.

For the kingdom of heaven is like to a master of a family, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour; and saw others standing idle in the market-place. And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard; and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their

way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour; and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing; and he saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go you also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the labourers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When, therefore, they came, who had come about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should have received more: and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they received it, they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour: and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he, answering one of them, said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or is it not lawful for me to do what I will? Is thy eye evil, because I am good? So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.

Thus it is that God rewards with the fulness of His blessings those who obey His call, wheresoever He calls them. Whether like the Jews, who were called at the first hour; or like the Gentiles, later in the day; or like the last heathen nations who shall be converted before the end of the world; or whether they are called in childhood, in youth, in manhood, or in old age, the highest rewards are within their reach, if they obey the call, whensoever it comes to them. It is not for us to dictate to Almighty God when or how He will call this person or that, or to complain that He requires of us a long and laborious service, while others are taken to their reward almost before they have known what trial is. It is for God to do what He wills with His own; and for us to rejoice that we ourselves are called at all, and to make our calling and election sure.

CHAP. XXXIII. The Prayer of James and John. Zacheus.
The Parable of the Pounds.

JESUS now going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart, and said to them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem: and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and to the Scribes: and they shall condemn Him to death; and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and to be scourged, and to be crucified: and the third day, He shall rise again.

And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him with their mother, and entreated Him to give them the highest place in that kingdom which they supposed He was about to establish upon earth. For, like the rest of the Jews, they imagined that the kingdom of the Messiah was to be an earthly monarchy, in which Jesus would reign, surrounded with all the pomp and power of this world. And Jesus said to them, You know not what you ask. They did not understand that they who were first in Christ's kingdom of spiritual glory must be first in suffering, and drink deep of that cup of sorrow which their Master was about to drain to the dregs, and be baptised with that baptism of fire and torment which He would undergo in atoning for the sins of man. And He asked them if they were able to drink of this cup, and be baptised with this baptism. And they scarcely knowing what they promised, said, We are able. And Jesus answered, that they should indeed share these things with Him, but that the highest places in His kingdom could not be given away in return for any person's petition, but were to be disposed of according to the eternal purposes of the Father.

And when they went out from Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And, behold, two blind men, sitting by the wayside, heard that Jesus passed by: and they cried out, saying: O Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us. And the multitude rebuked them that they should hold their peace. But they cried out the more, saying: O Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us.

And Jesus stood still, and called them ; and said : What will ye that I should do to you ? They say to Him : Lord, that our eyes may be opened. And Jesus, having compassion on them, touched their eyes. And immediately they received sight, and followed Him.

And there was a certain man, by name Zacheus : and this was the chief of the publicans : and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus, who He was : and he could not for the crowd ; because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree, that he might see Him : for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said to him : Zacheus, make haste and come down : for to-day I must abide in thy house. And he made haste and came down, and received Him with joy. And when they all saw it, they murmured, saying : that He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. But Zacheus stood, and said to the Lord : Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor : and if I have wronged any man of any thing, I restore him four-fold. Jesus said to him : This day is salvation come to this house : because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

And as there were many who supposed that the kingdom of Christ in all its glory was about speedily to appear, Jesus spake another parable, to teach them that He Himself was about to depart from this world ; that many years or ages must pass before He returned ; and that, in the mean time, His servants were to labour in His service, until He should come and take account with all at the great day of reckoning. He represented Himself as a nobleman who went into a far country to take possession of a kingdom, and who gave to each of his servants a sum of money to trade with during his absence. On his return, he called them all before him, and to one, who had gained ten pounds by his diligence and care, he gave a proportionate reward : to another who had gained five pounds, he gave a reward equal to his merits ; and a third, who had laid up his pound in a

napkin, and tried to excuse his idleness by pretending that he feared his lord's severity, he condemned to the punishment he had deserved.

And when Jesus had thus spoken, He went up towards Jerusalem.

CHAP. XXXIV. Jesus enters in Jerusalem.

THE time was now at hand when Jesus was to deliver Himself into the hands of His enemies ; and as it was fixed in the eternal counsels of God, that He should die at the time of the Passover ; that feast which had been instituted as a figure of His death ; He came to Bethania, a village close to Jerusalem, on the Sabbath-day which came immediately before the week in which the Passover was celebrated. As soon as He had reached Mount Olivet, which is close to Bethphage and Bethania, He prepared to enter Jerusalem in triumph : not, indeed, with all the pomp of an earthly monarch, but in such a way as to shew forth both His humility and His sovereignty over man. He sent forward two of His disciples, saying to them : Go ye into the village that is over against you : and immediately you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her : loose them, and bring them to Me. And if any man shall say any thing to you, say ye, that the Lord hath need of them ; and forthwith he will let them go. Now all this was done that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying : Tell ye the daughter of Sion : Behold, thy King cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke. And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded them.

And they brought the ass and the colt ; and laid their garments upon them, and made Him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way : and others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying : Hosanna to the Son of David : Blessed is He that

cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

And some of the Pharisees, from amongst the multitude, said to Him: Master, rebuke Thy disciples. And He said to them: I tell you, that if these should hold their peace the stones will cry out. And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace: but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.

And He was teaching daily in the temple; and there came to Him the blind and the lame: and He healed them. And when the chief priests and the Scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying: Hosanna to the Son of David: they were moved with indignation: and said to Him: Hearest Thou what these say? And Jesus said to them: Yea; have you never read: Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings thou hast perfected praise? And leaving them, He went out of the city into Bethania, and remained there.

CHAP. XXXV. Jesus purifies the Temple. The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen.

AND the next morning (being the second day of the week) returning into the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig-tree by the way-side, He came to it; and found nothing on it but leaves only: and He said to it: May no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig-tree withered away.

In those days a great abuse was practised in the temple at Jerusalem.: Money-changers set up their

tables, and practised their calling; and others sold in the sacred places the doves which were needed as offerings.

And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple; and at night He went out, and abode in Mount Olivet.

The following morning Jesus returned into the city. And as they passed along, they saw the fig-tree that had been cursed and dried up from the roots. And Peter said, Master, behold the fig-tree is withered away. And Jesus bade them have faith in the power of God, and promised them that whatsoever they should ask of God in prayer, even such wonders as should seem like the removing a mountain, and casting it into the sea, should be granted to their undoubting faith.

Then He went into the temple, and, as He was teaching, there came to Him the chief priests and ancients of the people, and said: By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority? Jesus, answering, said to them: I also will ask you one word, which if you shall tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? But they thought within themselves, saying: If we shall say, From heaven, He will say to us: Why then did not you believe Him? But if we shall say, From men, we are afraid of the multitude: for all held John as a prophet. And answering Jesus, they said: We know not. And He said to them: Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things. But what think you? A certain man had two sons; and coming to the first, he said: Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. And he, answering, said: I will not. But, afterwards, being moved with repentance, he went. And coming to the other, he said in like manner. And he answering, said: I go, sir. And he went not. Which of the two did the father's will? They say to Him: The first. Jesus saith to them: Amen I say to you, that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of justice: and you did not believe him. But the publicans and the harlots believed

him : but you, seeing it, did not even afterwards repent, that you might believe him.

And He spoke another parable foreshadowing His death, and the obstinacy of the Jews, who having first rejected and slain the prophets of the old law, would now slay the Son of God when He came among them, and, refusing to receive Him as the promised Messiah, would be disowned by God as His people, that the Gentiles might come in and take their place, and believe in Him whom the Jews had refused to hear. There was a man (He said) a householder who planted a vineyard, and made a hedge round about it, and dug in it a wine-press, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen : and went into a strange country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen having laid hold of his servants, they beat one, they killed another, and another they stoned. Again he sent other servants more than the former : and they did to them in like manner. And last of all he sent to them his son, saying : They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves : This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance. And taking him they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. When the lord, therefore, of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen ? They say to him : He will bring those evil men to an evil end ; and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, that shall render him the fruit in due season.

CHAP. XXXVI. The Parable of the Marriage-Feast.
The Tribute-Money.

AND Jesus spoke again to them in parables, saying : The kingdom of heaven is like to a man being a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage : and they would not come. Again he sent other ser-

vants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the wedding. But they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king heard of it, he was angry, and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city. Then he saith to his servants: The wedding, indeed, is ready: but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite to the wedding. And his servants going out into the highways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests: and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Having bound his hands and feet, cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

This parable again prefigures the rejection of the Jewish people for their unbelief, and the calling in of the Gentiles to the rewards of Christ's kingdom. The wedding garment represents that holiness of heart and life without which no man can sit down at the marriage-feast of the Lamb in heaven; and the guilt of the guest who came in without the required garment was doubly great, because it was the custom of princes and wealthy men on such occasions to furnish the garments to those guests who needed them, as God of His free mercy Himself bestows on us those graces which He requires at our hands.

The Pharisees then watched Jesus, and sent spies to ensnare Him by fresh devices. The Jews, though now subject to the Romans, had ever claimed to be an independent nation, as the chosen people of God. And the Pharisees hoped to bring Jesus to declare that they

ought now to be independent, and that it was unlawful to pay taxes to the Romans, in order that they might report His words to the governor, who ruled them as a deputy of Cæsar, the Roman emperor. Yet they themselves admitted that Cæsar was their master, by making use of the money which bore his portrait and royal titles; and thus out of their own mouths were they convicted.

Then again the Sadducees, a sect who denied a future life, sought to entangle Jesus into an admission that the doctrine of the resurrection was impossible. If a woman, they said, had seven husbands, one after another, during her life, to which of them would she belong in a future world. And Jesus replied that in the next world there was neither marrying nor giving.

And when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they came together: and one of them, a doctor of the law, asked Him, tempting Him: Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus said to him: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets.

CHAP. XXXVII. The Parables of the Widow's Mites, the Ten Virgins, the Talents, and the Sheep and the Goats.

AND Jesus, sitting over against the treasury, beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And calling His disciples together, He said to them: Amen I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. For they all did cast in of their abundance; but she, of her want, cast in all she had, even her whole living.

Then Jesus began to speak to them of the vengeance

that He would finally take upon the Jews for their sins, and of the terrible destruction of their city and nation. And He gave many signs and tokens by which His second coming to judge the world should be known to His people, and warned them of the last awful persecutions with which their faith should be tried, commanding them to be ever on the watch for His coming, because He would come as a thief in the night.

And He taught them the same things in parables. Then shall the kingdom of heaven, He said, be like to ten virgins, who, taking their lamps, went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. Now five of them were foolish; and five were wise. But the five foolish, having taken their lamps, took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps. And while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made: Behold, the bridegroom cometh: go ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise: Give us of your oil: for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered, saying: Lest there be not enough for us and for you; go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. Now, while they went to buy, the bridegroom came: and they who were ready, went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. But at last came also the other virgins, saying: Lord, Lord, open to us. But he, answering, said: Amen I say to you, I know you not. And thus will it be with those Christians who sleep the sleep of worldliness and sin, while the lamp of holiness, which God has given them to burn, is found extinguished at the moment that Christ calls them to judgment.

In another parable, which represented Himself as a man going into a far country, and giving to his servants certain talents, or large sums of money, to employ in his service, He warned them of the reckoning we shall all undergo at His judgment-seat. To one, said Jesus, he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to every one according to his proper ability: and immediately he took his journey. And he that had

received the five talents, went his way, and traded with the same, and gained other five. And in like manner he that had received the two, gained other two. But he that had received the one, going his way, digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. But after a long time the lord of those servants came, and reckoned with them. And he that had received the five talents, coming, brought other five talents, saying: Lord, thou deliveredst to me five talents: behold, I have gained other five over and above. His lord said to him: Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that had received the two talents, came and said: Lord, thou deliveredst two talents to me: behold, I have gained other two. His lord said to him: Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. But he that had received the one talent, came and said: Lord, I know that thou art a hard man; thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and gatherest where thou hast not strewed. And being afraid, I went, and hid thy talent in the earth: behold, here thou hast that which is thine. And his lord, answering, said to him: Thou evil and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strewed: thou oughtest, therefore, to have committed my money to the bankers: and at my coming I should have received my own with usury. Take ye away, therefore, the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away. And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And in His last parable Jesus prefigured the general judgment which He would institute for all the world. When the Son of man shall come in His majesty, and all the Angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat

of His majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before Him : and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats : and He shall set the sheep on His right hand ; but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand : Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me to eat : I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink : I was a stranger, and you took Me in ; naked, and you clothed Me ; sick, and you visited Me : I was in prison, and you came to Me. Then shall the just answer Him, saying : Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, and fed Thee ; thirsty, and gave Thee drink ? And when did we see Thee a stranger, and took Thee in, or naked, and clothed Thee ? Or when did we see Thee sick or in prison, and came to Thee ? And the King, answering, shall say to them : Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to Me. Then shall He say to them also that shall be on His left hand : Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat : I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink. I was a stranger, and you took Me not in ; naked, and you clothed Me not ; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me. Then shall they also answer Him, saying : Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to Thee ? Then shall He answer them, saying : Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least ones, neither did you do it to Me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment ; but the just, into life everlasting.

CHAP. XXXVIII. The Last Supper.

AND it came to pass, when Jesus had ended all these words, He said to His disciples : You know that after

two days shall be the pasch ; and the Son of man shall be delivered up to be crucified. Then were gathered together the chief priests, and the ancients of the people, into the palace of the high-priest, who was called Cai-phas : and they consulted together, that by subtilty they might apprehend Jesus, and put Him to death. But they said : Not on the festival day, lest there should be a tumult among the people.

And Jesus being again in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, there came to Him a woman having an alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured it on His head as He was at table. And the disciples seeing it, had indignation, saying : To what purpose is this waste ? For this might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. And Jesus knowing it said to them : Why do you trouble this woman ? for she hath wrought a good work upon Me. For the poor you have always with you : but Me you have not always. For she, in pouring this ointment upon My body, hath done it for My burial. Amen I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done, shall be told for a memory of her.

Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests : and he said to them : What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you ? But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver. And from thenceforth he sought opportunity to betray Him.

The feast of Azymes, or of unleavened bread, when the Jews put away all leaven from their houses, and prepared to eat the paschal lamb, was now commencing, and the disciples came to Jesus, saying : Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the pasch ? But Jesus said : Go ye into the city to a certain man, and say to him : The Master saith : My time is near at hand : I will keep the pasch at thy house with My disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them : and they prepared the pasch.

And when it was evening, He sat down with His twelve disciples. And whilst they were eating, He said : Amen I say to you, that one of you is about to betray

Me. And they, being very much troubled, began every one to say: Is it I, Lord? But He, answering, said: He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him: but wo to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for that man if he had not been born. And Judas that betrayed Him, answering, said: Is it I, Rabbi? He saith to him: Thou hast said it.

And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to His disciples; and said: Take ye and eat: This is My body. And taking the chalice, He gave thanks; and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is My blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins.

And when supper was done, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas the son of Simon the Iscariot, to betray Him: knowing that the Father had given Him all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and goeth to God: He riseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments: and having taken a towel, He girdeth Himself. After that, He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. He cometh, therefore, to Simon Peter. And Peter saith to Him: Lord, dost Thou wash my feet? Jesus answered, and said to him: What I do, thou knowest not now: but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith to Him: Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him: If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me. Simon Peter saith to Him: Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head. Jesus said to him: He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. And you are clean, but not all. For He knew who he was that would betray Him; therefore He said: You are not all clean. Then after He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, having sat down again, He said to them: Know you what I have done to you? You call Me Master, and

Lord : and you say well : for so I am. If I, then, being Lord and Master, have washed your feet ; you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also.

When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit : and He protested, and said : Amen, amen I say to you : that one of you will betray Me. The disciples, therefore, looked one upon another, doubting of whom He spoke. Now there was leaning on Jesus's bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter, therefore, beckoned to him, and said to him : Who is it, of whom He speaketh ? He, therefore, leaning on the breast of Jesus, saith to him : Lord, who is it ? Jesus answered : He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped. And when He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the morsel, Satan entered into him. And Jesus said to him : That which thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent He said this to him. For some thought, because Judas had the purse, that Jesus had said to him : Buy those things which we have need of for the festival day ; or that he should give something to the poor. He, then, having received the morsel, went out immediately. And it was night.

When Judas then was gone out, Jesus said : Now is the Son of man glorified ; and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself : and immediately will He glorify Him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek Me : and, as I said to the Jews : Whither I go, you cannot come : so now I say to you. I give you a new commandment : That you love one another ; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another. Simon Peter saith to Him : Lord, whither goest Thou ? Jesus answered : Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now : but thou shalt follow Me afterwards. Peter saith to Him : Why cannot I follow Thee now ? I will lay down my life for Thee. Jesus answered him : Wilt thou lay down thy life for

Me? Amen, amen I say to thee, the cock shall not crow till thou deny Me thrice.

Then Jesus taught to His beloved disciples more clearly than He had hitherto done, all the great blessings they would enjoy through His death and passion; He prepared them for the events that were about to come; and prayed for them to the Eternal Father that they might persevere to the end.

CHAP. XXXIX. The Agony in the Garden. Peter denies Christ.

AND when they had sung a hymn they went out to Mount Olivet, and came to a place called Gethsemani, where was a garden, and Jesus said to His disciples: Sit you here till I go yonder, and pray. And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to grow sorrowful, and to be sad. Then He saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay you here, and watch with Me. And going a little farther, He fell upon His face, praying and saying: O My Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. And He cometh to His disciples, and findeth them asleep: and He saith to Peter: What! could you not watch one hour with Me? Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh weak. Again He went the second time, and prayed, saying: O My Father, if this chalice cannot pass away except I drink it, Thy will be done. And He cometh again, and findeth them asleep: for their eyes were heavy. And leaving them, He went away again: and He prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He cometh to His disciples, and saith to them: Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand: and the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go: behold, he is at hand that will betray Me.

As He yet spoke, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and

clubs, sent from the chief priests and ancients of the people.

Judas, therefore, having received a band of men and servants from the chief priests and the Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that were to come upon Him, went forward, and said to them: Whom seek ye? They answered Him: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them: I am He. And Judas also, who betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon then as He had said to them: I am He: they went backward, and fell to the ground. Again, therefore, He asked them: Whom seek ye? And they said: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you, that I am He: if, therefore, you seek Me, let these go their way: That the word might be fulfilled which He said: Of them whom Thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it; and struck the servant of the high-priest; and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus. Then Jesus said to Peter: Put up thy sword into the scabbard. The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it? Then the disciples forsook Him and fled.

And they took Jesus, and bound Him, and led Him away to Annas first: for he was father-in-law to Caiphas, who was the high-priest of that year. Now Caiphas was he who had given the counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. And that disciple was known to the high-priest, and went in with Jesus into the court of the high-priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then the other disciple who was known to the high-priest, went out, and spoke to the portress, and brought in Peter.

And there came to him a servant-maid, saying: Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: I know not what thou sayest. And as he went out of the gate, another maid saw him; and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he said, with

an oath : I do not know the man. And after a little while they that stood by came, and said to Peter : Surely thou also art one of them : for even thy speech doth discover thee. Then he began to curse, and to swear that he knew not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus which He had said : Before the cock crow, thou wilt deny Me thrice. And going forth, he wept bitterly.

And the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put Him to death : and they found not, though many false witnesses had come in. And last of all there came in two false witnesses. And they said : This Man said : I am able to destroy the temple of God, and in three days to rebuild it. And the high-priest rising up, said to Him : Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witnesses against Thee? But Jesus held His peace. And the high-priest said to Him : I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ the Son of God. Jesus saith to him : Thou hast said it. Nevertheless I say to you, Hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rent his garments, crying : He hath blasphemed : what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy : what think you? But they answering, said : He is guilty of death. Then they did spit in His face, and buffeted Him : and others struck His face with the palms of their hands, saying : Prophecy unto us, O Christ ; who is he that struck Thee?

CHAP. XL. Christ before Herod and Pilate. The Scourging and Crucifixion.

As soon as it was day, the chief priests and ancients of the people held a council against Jesus, to put Him to death. And they brought Him bound, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. And Jesus stood

before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying: Art Thou the king of the Jews? Jesus saith to him: Thou sayest it. And when He was accused by the chief priests and ancients, He answered nothing. Then Pilate saith to Him: Dost not Thou hear how great testimonies they allege against Thee? And He answered him not to any word: so that the governor wondered exceedingly.

Then Pilate, hearing that Jesus was of Galilee, sent Him to king Herod; as Galilee was under Herod's jurisdiction. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad; for he was desirous of a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things of Him: and he hoped to see some miracle wrought by Him. And he questioned Him with many words. But He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood by, earnestly accusing Him. And Herod with his soldiers despised Him, and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment; and sent Him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate were made friends together that same day: for before they were enemies one to another.

Now upon the solemn day the governor was accustomed to release to the people one prisoner, whom they would. And he had then a notorious prisoner that was called Barabbas. They therefore being gathered together, Pilate said: Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew that through envy they had delivered Him up. And as he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent to him, saying: Have thou nothing to do with that just Man. For I have suffered many things this day in a dream on account of Him. But the chief priests and ancients persuaded the people, that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away. And the governor answering, said to them: Which will you have of the two to be released unto you? But they said, Barabbas. Pilate saith to them: What shall I do, then, with Jesus that is called Christ? They all say: Let Him be crucified. The governor said to them: Why, what evil hath He done? But they cried out the more, saying: Let

Him be crucified. And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, having taken water, washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just Man: look you to it. And all the people answering, said: His blood be upon us, and upon our children. Then he released to them Barabbas; and having scourged Jesus, delivered Him to them to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto Him the whole band: and stripping Him, they put a scarlet cloak about Him. And plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand. And bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews. And spitting upon Him, they took the reed, and struck His head.

Pilate then went forth again to the multitude of the people without, and said to them: Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that you may know that I find no cause in Him. (So Jesus came forth, bearing the crown of thorns, and the purple garment.) And he saith to them: Behold the man. When the chief priests, therefore, and the officers had seen Him, they cried out, saying: Crucify Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith to them: Take Him you, and crucify Him: for I find no cause in Him. The Jews answered him: We have a law; and according to the law He ought to die; because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate, therefore, had heard this saying, he feared the more. And he entered into the hall again: and he said to Jesus: Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith to Him: Speakest Thou not to me? knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and I have power to release Thee. Jesus answered: Thou shouldst not have any power against Me, unless it were given thee from above. Therefore, he that hath delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him. But the Jews cried out, saying: If thou release this Man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: for whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against

Cæsar. Now when Pilate had heard these words, he brought Jesus forth; and sat down in the judgment-seat, in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha. And it was the parasceve of the pasch, about the sixth hour: and he saith to the Jews: Behold your king. But they cried out: Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him. Pilate saith to them: Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered: We have no king but Cæsar. Then, therefore, he delivered Him to them to be crucified.

Then Judas, who betrayed Him, seeing that He was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the ancients, saying: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said: What is that to us? Look thou to it. And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and went and hanged himself with a halter. But the chief priest having taken the pieces of silver, said: It is not lawful to put them into the corbona, because it is the price of blood. And having consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field, to be a burying-place for strangers. Wherefore that field was called Haceldama, that is, The field of blood, even to this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was valued, whom they prized of the children of Israel. And they gave them unto the potter's field, as the Lord appointed to me.

And after they had mocked Him, they took off from Him the purple robe, and put His own raiment upon Him, and led Him away to crucify Him. And as they led Him away, they laid hold on one Simon of Cyrene, that was coming out of the country: and they laid the cross on him, to carry after Jesus. And there followed Him a great multitude of people and of women; who bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

And they came to the place that is called Golgotha,

which is, the place of Calvary. And they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall. And when He had tasted, He would not drink. And after they had crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots; that the word might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, saying: They divided My garments among them; and upon My vesture they cast lots. And they sat down, and watched Him. And they put over His head His cause written: **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS**. Then were crucified with Him two thieves: one on the right hand, and the other on the left. And the soldiers took His garments (and made four parts of them, to every soldier a part), and also His coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said then one to another: Let us not cut it; but let us cast lots for it whose it shall be; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saying: They have parted My garments among them; and upon My vesture they have cast lots. And Pilate wrote a title also: and he put it upon the cross. And the writing was, **JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS**. This title, therefore, many of the Jews read: because the place where Jesus was crucified, was near to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate: Write not, the king of the Jews; but that He said, I am the king of the Jews. Pilate answered: What I have written, I have written.

And they that passed by, blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, Thou who destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again, save Thy own Self: if Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests with the Scribes and ancients mocking, said: He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the king of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him; for He said: I am the Son of God. And one of the thieves who were crucified with Him, blasphemed Him, saying: If Thou

be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying : Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation ? And we indeed justly ; for we receive the due reward of our deeds : but this Man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus : Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him : Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw His mother and the disciple standing, whom He loved, He saith to His mother : Woman, behold thy son. After that, He saith to the disciple : Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own.

Then from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the earth, until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying : Eli, Eli, lamma sabachthani ? that is, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? And some of them that stood there, and heard, said : This Man calleth for Elias. And immediately one of them running, took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar ; and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. And the others said : Stay ; let us see whether Elias will come to deliver Him. When Jesus had received the vinegar, He cried with a loud voice, and said : It is consummated. And He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom : and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent. And the graves were opened : and many bodies of the saints that had slept, arose ; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. Now the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake, and the things that were done, were greatly afraid, saying : Indeed this was the Son of God. And there were there many women afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him : among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the

mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

CHAP. XLI. The Burial of our Lord.

THE Jews now having put Jesus to death, with that zeal for some of the customs of their time, which they united with the greatest crimes, were desirous of having the body of Jesus taken down from the cross before the Sabbath-day. They went, therefore, to Pilate, and besought him to allow the legs of those who had been crucified to be broken, that so their death might be hastened. The soldiers then broke the legs of the two thieves ; but when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs ; but one of the soldiers opened His side with a spear : and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it, gave testimony : and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true ; that you also may believe. For these things were done, that the Scripture might be fulfilled : You shall not break a bone of Him. And again another Scripture saith : They shall look on Him whom they pierced. And after these things Joseph of Arimathea (because he was a disciple of Jesus, but in private, for fear of the Jews) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted him. He came, therefore, and took away the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus also came : he who at first came to Jesus by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. They took, therefore, the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen-cloths with the spices, as it is the custom with the Jews to bury. And there was, in the place where He was crucified, a garden : and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein no man had yet been laid. There, therefore, by reason of the parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulchre was nigh at hand. And the women that were come with Him from Galilee, following after, saw the sepulchre, and how His body was

laid. And returning they prepared spices and ointments: and on the sabbath-day they rested according to the commandment.

And the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered, that that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day; lest His disciples come, and steal Him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: You have a guard: go, guard it as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, setting guards.

CHAP. XLII. The Resurrection.

TOWARDS the end of the sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven; and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men. And the angel answering said to the women: Fear not you: for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come and see the place where the Lord was laid. And, going quickly, tell ye His disciples that He is risen: and, behold, He will go before you into Galilee: there you shall see Him. Lo, I have foretold it to you. And they went out quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, running to tell His disciples. And, behold, Jesus met them saying: All hail. But they came up, and took hold of His feet, and worshipped Him. Then Jesus said to them: Be not afraid. Go, tell My brethren that they go into Galilee; there shall they see Me.

And they went and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest; but they did not believe them. Peter,



THE RESURRECTION.

however, and John, the beloved disciple, went out to the sepulchre; and they both ran together: and that other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen-cloths lying: but yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen-cloths lying; and the napkin that had been about His head, not lying with the linen-cloths, but apart, wrapt up into one place. Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre: and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again to their home.

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping: whilst she was then weeping, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre: and she saw two angels, in white, sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her: Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them: Because they have taken away my Lord: and I know not where they have laid Him. When she had said these words, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing: and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her: Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, thinking it was the gardener, saith to Him: Sir, if Thou hast taken Him away, tell me where thou hast laid Him; and I will take Him away. Jesus saith to her: Mary. She, turning, saith to Him: Rabboni (that is to say, Master). Jesus saith to her: Do not touch Me; for I have not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren; and say to them: I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and your God. Mary Magdalene cometh, telling the disciples: I have seen the Lord, and these things He said to me.

In the mean time some of the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all the things that had been done. And they being assembled together with the ancients, having taken counsel, they gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying: Say you, that His disciples

came by night, and stole Him away when we were asleep. And if the governor shall hear of this, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they, taking the money, did as they were taught.

CHAP. XLIII. Our Lord appears to the Disciples at Emmaus, and to the Apostles.

On the same day two of the disciples went to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that, while they talked and reasoned with one another, Jesus Himself also drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were held, that they should not know Him. And He said to them: What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad? And the one, whose name was Cleophas, answering, said to Him: Art thou alone a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days? And He said to them: What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in work and word, before God and all the people; and how our chief priests and rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we hoped that it was He who should have redeemed Israel: and now, besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea and certain women also of our company affrighted us, who, before it was light, were at the sepulchre: and, not finding His body, came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre; and found it so as the women had said: but Him they found not. Then He said to them: O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all the things which the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory? And beginning from Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded to them, in all the Scriptures,

the things that were concerning Him. And they drew nigh to the town whither they were going: and He made as though He would go farther. But they constrained Him, saying: Stay with us, because it is towards evening; and the day is now far spent. And He went in with them. And it came to pass, whilst He was at table with them, He took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened; and they knew Him: and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He was speaking in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up at the same hour, and went back to Jerusalem: and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them, saying: The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way: and how they knew Him in the breaking of bread.

And as they were speaking these things, Jesus stood in the midst of them, and saith to them: Peace be to you; it is I, fear not. But they being troubled and affrighted, supposed that they saw a spirit. And He said to them: Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I myself: feel and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have. And when He had said this, He shewed them His hands and His feet. But while they yet believed not, and wondered for joy, He said: Have you here any thing to eat? And they offered Him a piece of broiled fish, and a honey-comb. And when He had eaten before them, taking the remains, He gave to them. And He said to them: These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me. Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. And He said to them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day. And that penance and remission of sins

should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.

And He said to them : Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved : but he that believeth not, shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe : In My name they shall cast out devils : they shall speak with new tongues : they shall take up serpents : and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them : they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.

CHAP. XLIV. The Incredulity of Thomas. Jesus appears at the Sea of Tiberias. Christ's Charge to Peter.

ONE of the apostles, Thomas, called Didymus, was not with the others when Jesus appeared to them. And when they told him, We have seen the Lord, he replied : Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe. And after eight days, His disciples were again within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the door being shut, and stood in the midst ; and said : Peace be to you. Then He saith to Thomas : Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side : and be not incredulous, but faithful. Thomas answered, and said to Him : My Lord, and my God. Jesus saith to him : Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.

After this Jesus shewed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias. And He shewed Himself after this manner. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas who is called Didymus, and Nathanael who was of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples. Simon Peter saith to them : I go a fishing. They say to him : We also come with

thee. And they went forth, and entered into a ship : and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore : yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. And Jesus said to them : Children, have you any meat ? They answered Him : No. He saith to them : Cast the net on the right side of the ship ; and you shall find. They cast therefore : and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. That disciple, therefore, whom Jesus loved, said to Peter : It is the Lord. Simon Peter, when he heard that it was the Lord, girded his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the ship (for they were not far from the land, but as it were two hundred cubits), drawing the net with fishes. As soon, then, as they came to land, they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith to them : Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, one hundred and fifty-three. And although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus saith to them : Come, and dine. And none of them, who were at meat, durst ask Him : Who art Thou ? knowing that it was the Lord. And Jesus cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them : and fish in like manner. This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to His disciples, after He was risen from the dead.

When, therefore, they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter : Simon son of John, lovest thou Me more than these ? He saith to Him : Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him : Feed My lambs. He saith to him again : Simon son of John, lovest thou Me ? He saith to Him : Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him : Feed My lambs. He saith to him the third time : Simon son of John, lovest thou Me ? Peter was grieved, because He said to him the third time, Lovest thou Me ? And he said to Him : Lord, Thou knowest all things : Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him : Feed My sheep. Amen, amen, I say to thee : when thou wast

younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands; and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. And this He said, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had said this, He saith to him: Follow Me.

CHAP. XLV. The Ascension.

AFTER this the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to a mountain which Jesus had appointed. And when they saw Him they adored Him, but some doubted. And Jesus said to them: All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Go, therefore, and teach all nations; baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.

And He commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard (saith He) by My mouth. For John indeed baptized with water: but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence. They, therefore, who were come together, asked Him, saying: Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? But He said to them: It is not for you to know the times or moments, which the Father hath put in His own power: but you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth. And the forty days which were to pass between His resurrection and ascension being now accomplished, He led them out as far as Bethania; and while they looked on He was lifted up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

And while they were beholding Him going up to

heaven, behold, two men stood by them, in white garments. Who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, so shall He come as you have seen Him going into heaven. Then they returned to Jerusalem, from the mount that is called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, within a sabbath-day's journey.

BOOK VII.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

CHAP. I. The Gift of the Holy Ghost. Peter preaches to the People.

THE disciples of our blessed Lord now remained in Jerusalem, waiting for the fulfilment of His promised gift of the Holy Ghost, before they commenced the work of preaching the gospel. They were in number about one hundred and twenty. Mary, His blessed Mother, continued with them, with one mind in prayer. She dwelt with the apostle St. John, according to her divine Son's command, Joseph her husband being now dead.

The first duty of the apostles was to fill up the place in their number which was vacant by the death of Judas Iscariot the traitor. They chose two men from those who had followed Jesus from the time He began to preach, and who were witnesses of His resurrection, by name Barsabas and Matthias. And when they had prayed, they cast lots, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

And on the fiftieth day after the resurrection, on the feast of Pentecost, they were all together in the same place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming: and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them cloven tongues as it were of fire: and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost: and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. And

when this voice was made, the multitude came together, and was confounded in mind, because that every one heard them speaking in his own tongue. And they were all amazed, and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these, who speak, Galileans? And how have we every one heard our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphilia, Egypt, and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all astonished, and wondered, saying one to another: What meaneth this? But others mocking, said: These men are full of new wine.

Peter then stood up with the other apostles, and declared to the people that this wonderful gift was the work of the Holy Ghost, which had been foretold by the prophet Joel, and that He who had wrought it was none other than that Jesus whom they had crucified, and whom God had raised from the dead.

And when they heard these things, they had compunction in their heart: and they said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles: What shall we do, men brethren? And Peter said to them: Do penance, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, whomsoever the Lord our God shall call. And with a great many other words did he testify and exhort them, saying: Save yourselves from this perverse generation. They, therefore, that received his word, were baptised: and there were added to them in that day about three thousand souls. And they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles in Jerusalem: and there was great fear in all. And all they that believed were together, and had

all things common. They sold their possessions and goods, and divided them to all, according as every one had need. And continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart: praising God together, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added daily to their society such as should be saved.

CHAP. II. The Lame Man healed. Peter preaches to the People.
The Apostles are apprehended.

It was the will of God that the whole ceremonial law of Moses should now be abolished, that the distinction between Jew and Gentile should cease, and the gospel be preached to all nations alike. The Church was henceforth to be taught and governed, not by the priesthood of Aaron, but by the Christian priesthood, of which the apostles and their successors were to be the chief, one of the apostles, Simon Peter, and his successors, being supreme over all. Nevertheless, such of the Jews as were converted were permitted, if they wished it, to conform to the ceremonial rules of the law of Moses, provided only they did not insist upon them as obligatory upon all Christians. And especially all the Christians continued to frequent the temple at the time of public prayer.

It was on one of these occasions that the apostles wrought their first miracle, after the departure of our Lord. At the ninth hour, Peter and John went up into the temple to pray; and a certain man, who was lame from his mother's womb, was carried: whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called the Beautiful, that he might beg alms of them that went into the temple. He, when he had seen Peter and John about to go into the temple, begged to receive an alms. But Peter, with John, fixing his eyes upon him, said: Look upon us. And he looked earnestly upon them, hoping that he should receive something from them. But Peter said: Silver and gold I have none:

but what I have, I give thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And having taken him by the right hand, he lifted him up, and forthwith his feet and soles became firm. And he leaping up, stood, and walked; and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

And when great crowds were gathered together at the tidings of the miracle, Peter again preached to them that it was by the power of the crucified Jesus that these things were done: and he called upon them all to believe in His name, and repent of their sins. This roused the jealousy of the priests and rulers of the people, and they seized the apostles and cast them into prison; for already the number of those who believed had reached five thousand. And the next day they called the apostles before them, and asked by what power, or name, they did these things. And Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, again declared that it was Jesus of Nazareth who wrought these marvels. And the rulers, seeing the constancy of the apostles, and knowing that they were poor and unlearned persons, were astonished and terrified, and contented themselves with commanding them to keep silence for the future. And they let them go, fearing the vengeance of the people if they punished them, though the apostles declared that they must obey God rather than men.

CHAP. III. Ananias and Saphira. The Miracles of the Apostles.
They are apprehended and scourged.

AT this wonderful progress of the faith, and the deliverance of the apostles, the hearts of all who believed were filled with joy, and peace and brotherly love ruled the souls of all. They cast their goods also into one common stock, and each was supplied according to his need.

But a certain man, named Ananias, with Saphira his wife, sold a field, and by fraud kept part of the price of the field, his wife being conscious of it; and bringing a certain part of it, he laid it at the feet of the

apostles. But Peter said: Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost, and by fraud keep part of the price of the field? Whilst it remained, did it not remain to thee? and being sold, was it not in thy power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied to men, but to God. And Ananias hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost. And great fear came upon all that heard it. And the young men rising up, removed him, and carrying him out, buried him. And it came to pass, about the space of three hours after, his wife also, not knowing what had happened, came in. And Peter said to her: Tell me, woman, whether you sold the field for so much? And she said: Yea, for so much. And Peter said unto her: Why have you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried thy husband, are at the door; and they shall carry thee out. Immediately she fell down before his feet, and gave up the ghost. And the young men coming in, found her dead; and carried her out, and buried her by her husband. And there came great fear upon the whole Church, and upon all that heard these things.

And by the hands of the Apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. But of the rest no one durst join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And the multitude of men and women that believed in the Lord was more increased, insomuch that they brought out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that when Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities. And there came also together to Jerusalem a multitude out of the neighbouring cities, bringing sick persons, and such as were troubled with unclean spirits: who were all healed.

Then, again, the high-priest, who at this time was of the sect of the Sadducees, with his supporters, filled with fear and anger, seized the apostles and cast them

into the common prison. But at night an angel set them free, and bade them return and preach again in the temple. This miraculous deliverance, however, only terrified in some degree the unbelieving high-priest. He again seized the apostles, though without force, fearing the people, and brought them before the council. And when Peter and the rest boldly declared the resurrection of Jesus before them, they were cut to the heart, and proposed to put them to death. By the advice of Gamaliel, a Pharisee of great learning and repute, they, however, gave up the bloody design, and contented themselves with scourging the apostles, and then dismissed them. And they went from the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. And they ceased not every day in the temple, and from house to house, to teach and preach Christ Jesus.

CHAP. IV. The Ordaining of the Seven Deacons. The Zeal and Martyrdom of Stephen. Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch.

THE number of Christians now increasing rapidly, a dispute arose from the difficulty the apostles found in attending to the temporal concerns of the poor. The converts who had been brought up among the Gentiles complained against the rest, that their widows were neglected in the daily distribution of money. The apostles, therefore, enjoined on the brethren to choose seven men, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, who should fulfil the duties of deacons, and superintend the business, for which they themselves had no leisure. And they chose Stephen, Philip, Prochoras, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch. These seven the apostles ordained, by the imposition of hands, with prayer.

Stephen, one of the seven, immediately did great wonders and signs among the people; and confounded, by his speaking, all those who disputed with him. The unbelieving Jews then bribed false witnesses to say that

Stephen had blasphemed against Moses and against God; and they carried him before the council of the high-priest. There Stephen again preached the power of Jesus Christ; reminding the Jews of their past history, of the mercies of God to them, and of the madness with which their fathers had ever persecuted the prophets. And they were cut to the heart: and they gnashed with their teeth at him. But he being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said: Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. And they crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord rushed in violently upon him. And having cast him out of the city, they stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking, and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And kneeling down, he cried out with a loud voice, saying: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord. And Saul was consenting to his death.

The death of Stephen was the signal for a fierce persecution of all the Christians in Jerusalem; they dispersed themselves throughout Judea and Samaria, the apostles alone remaining at Jerusalem. Saul was distinguished among the bloodiest persecutors; and he went from house to house, and dragged men and women alike to prison.

Meanwhile this persecution at Jerusalem became the means of the spread of the Gospel into many places throughout the country. In Samaria, Philip the deacon converted great numbers of men and women; among the rest Simon, a man who had practised magic, and deceived many people. All these Philip baptised; and afterwards the apostles Peter and John came down from Jerusalem, and confirmed the new converts by laying on of hands. And when Simon saw, that by the imposition of the hands of the apostles the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying: Give me also

this power, that on whomsoever I shall lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said to him : May thy money perish with thee : because thou hast esteemed the gift of God to be purchased with money. Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter : for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Do penance, therefore, from this thy wickedness : and pray to God, that perhaps this thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee : for I see thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity. Then Simon answering, said : Pray you to the Lord for me, that none of these things which you have said may come upon me.

Peter and John then returned to Jerusalem, preaching as they went to many cities of the Samaritans. And an angel appeared to Philip, and bade him go down to the Southern country, between Jerusalem and Gaza. And he went. And there was a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch, of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge over all her treasures, had come to Jerusalem to adore. And he was returning, sitting on his chariot, and reading Isaias the prophet. And the Spirit said to Philip : Go near, and join thyself to that chariot. And Philip running thither, heard him reading the Prophet Isaias : and he said : Thinkest thou that thou understandest what thou readest ? And he said : How can I, unless some one shew me ? And he desired Philip to come up, and sit with him. And the place of the Scripture, which he read, was this : As a sheep He was led to the slaughter : and like a lamb without a voice before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth. In humility His judgment was taken away. Who shall declare His generation ; for His life shall be taken away from the earth. And the eunuch, answering Philip, said : I beseech thee, of whom doth the prophet speak this ? of himself, or of some other ? And Philip, opening his mouth, and beginning at that Scripture, preached to him Jesus. And as they went on the way, they came to a certain water : and the eunuch saith : See ; here is water ; what hindereth me from being baptised ? And Philip said : If thou believest

with thy whole heart, thou mayest. And he answering, said: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch; and he baptised him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took away Philip: and the eunuch saw him no more. And he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found in Azotus; and passing through, he preached the Gospel to all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.

CHAP. V. The Conversion of Saul.

DURING this time Saul, who had assisted at the murder of Stephen, continued breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples, and went to the high-priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues; that if he found any men and women of this way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he went on his journey, it came to pass, that he drew near to Damascus: and suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute Me? And he said: Who art Thou, Lord? And He said: I am Jesus, whom thou dost persecute: it is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And he, trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city; and there it shall be told thee what thou must do. Now the men, who went in company with him, stood amazed, hearing indeed a voice, but seeing no one. And Saul arose from the ground; and his eyes being open, he saw nothing. But they leading him by the hands, brought him into Damascus. And he was there three days, without sight: and he neither eat nor drank.

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, by name Ananias: and the Lord said to him in a vision: Ananias. And he said: Behold, I am here, Lord. And

the Lord said to him : Arise, and go into the street, that is called Strait ; and seek, in the house of Judas, one named Saul of Tarsus ; for, behold, he prayeth. (And he saw a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight.) But Ananias answered : Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how great evils he hath done to Thy saints in Jerusalem : and here he hath authority from the chief priests, to bind all that invoke Thy name. And the Lord said to him : Go ; for this man is a vessel of election to Me, to carry My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for the sake of My name. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house ; and laying his hands on him, he said : Saul, brother, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, He who appeared to thee in the way as thou camest, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales : and he received his sight ; and rising up, he was baptised. And when he had taken meat, he was strengthened.

And he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, for some days. And immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. And all were astonished that heard him, and said : Is not this he who in Jerusalem attacked violently those who called upon that name ; and came hither for this purpose, that he might lead them bound to the chief priests ? But Saul increased much more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, affirming that this is the Christ. And when many days were passed, the Jews consulted together to kill him. But their laying in wait was made known to Saul. And they guarded the gates also day and night, that they might kill him. But the disciples taking him by night, conveyed him away by the wall, letting him down in a basket. And when he was come into Jerusalem, he offered to join himself to the disciples ; and all were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took

him, and brought him to the apostles, and related to them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had acted confidently in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out in Jerusalem, and acting confidently in the name of the Lord. He spoke also to the Gentiles, and disputed with the Grecians : but they sought to kill him. Which when the brethren had known, they brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him away to Tarsus.

CHAP. VI. Peter heals Eneas, and raises Tabitha to life.
The Conversion of Cornelius.

THE Church now had rest and peace for a while. And Peter went about consoling and instructing the disciples, and working great wonders amongst them. He healed Eneas of Lydda, who had been confined to his bed for eight years with the palsy, at Joppe ; and raised to life Tabitha (called also Dorcas), a woman of great piety and charity to the poor.

While he remained in Joppe, it pleased God to call in the Gentiles to the Church ; for hitherto the Gospel had been preached only in Judea and Samaria. In Cesarea dwelt a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the band which is called the Italian. A religious man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always : he saw in a vision manifestly, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying to him : Cornelius. And he beholding him, being seized with fear, said : What is it, Lord ? And He said to him : Thy prayers and thy alms have ascended for a memorial in the sight of God. And now send men to Joppe, and call hither one Simon, who is surnamed Peter : he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side : he shall tell thee what thou must do. And when the angel who spoke to him was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a soldier

that feared the Lord, of those who were under him : to whom when he had related all, he sent them to Joppe.

On the next day, whilst they were going on their journey, and drawing near to the city, Peter went up to the higher parts of the house to pray, about the sixth hour. And being hungry, he was desirous to taste somewhat. And as they were preparing, there came upon him an ecstasy of mind : and he saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by the four corners from heaven to the earth, in which were all manner of four-footed beasts, and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him : Arise, Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said : Far be it from me, Lord : for I have never eaten any common and unclean thing. For he still believed that he was to continue to obey the old rules of the law of Moses, by which the flesh of many animals was made unclean, and forbidden as food. And a Voice from heaven reproved him, saying : That which God hath cleansed, do not thou call common. These beasts and birds were sent to the apostle as a figure of the race of men, both Jew and Gentile ; and, by the command to kill and eat, Peter was taught that the distinction between the clean Jew and the unclean Gentile was henceforth to be abolished. And all this was done three times ; and immediately the vessel was drawn up into heaven.

Peter still doubted what the vision could mean, when the messengers of Cornelius came to the gate of the house, and inquired whether Simon surnamed Peter lodged there. And as Peter was thinking on the vision, the Spirit said to him : Behold, three men seek thee. Then Peter brought them in, and lodged them ; and the next day departed with them to go to Cornelius. And Cornelius waited for them, having called together his kinsmen and special friends. And it came to pass, when Peter was come in, Cornelius met him, and falling down at his feet worshipped. But Peter raised him up, saying : Rise, I myself also am a man. And talking with him he went in, and found many that

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were come together. And he said to them : You know how abominable a thing it is for a man that is a Jew to keep company or to come to one of another nation : but God hath shewed to me not to call any man common or unclean. Wherefore making no doubt, I came when I was sent for. I ask, therefore, for what cause you have sent for me ? And Cornelius said : Four days ago, until this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold a man stood before me in white apparel, and said : Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thy alms are remembered in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppe, and call hither Simon, who is surnamed Peter : he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner by the sea-side. Immediately therefore I sent to thee : and thou hast done well in coming. Now, therefore, all we are present in thy sight, to hear all things whatsoever are commanded thee by the Lord.

Then Peter said : In very deed I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons ; but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh justice is acceptable to Him. And as he preached Jesus and the resurrection, and declared that all the prophets gave testimony that by His name all who believe receive remission of sins, the Holy Ghost fell upon Cornelius and the rest. And the believers of the Jewish race, who had come with Peter, were astonished because the grace of the Holy Ghost was also poured out upon the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking with tongues, and magnifying God. Then Peter answered : Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ? And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then they entreated him to stay with them some days.

Peter then returned to Jerusalem, where the Jewish believer was at first blamed for his intercourse with the Gentiles, until he related to them his vision, and all that had taken place. Then they glorified God, for having given to the Gentiles repentance unto life.

During the next year great multitudes were con-

verted at Antioch by the preaching of Barnabas and Saul. And at Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. There also a prophet from Jerusalem named Agabus foretold a great famine shortly to take place; upon which the disciples, according to their ability, immediately sent relief to their poorer brethren in Judea, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

CHAP. VII. Herod's Persecution. Peter's Deliverance.
Herod's Death.

KING HEROD now commenced a fresh persecution of the Church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword. And seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also (now it was in the days of the azymes), whom, as soon as he had apprehended, he cast into prison, delivering him to four quaternions of soldiers to be kept, intending, after the pasch, to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison. But prayer was made without ceasing by the Church to God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, that very night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and the guards before the door kept the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him: and a light shined in the room: and he striking Peter on the side, raised him up, saying: Arise quickly. And the chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said to him: Gird thyself, and put on thy sandals. And he did so. And he said to him: Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And going out he followed him, and knew not that it was true, which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. And having passed through the first and the second ward, they came to the iron gate that leadeth to the city, which of itself opened to them. And going out, they passed on through one street; and immediately the angel departed from him.

And Peter coming to himself, said: Now I know

indeed that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And considering, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, where many were assembled, and praying. And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhode. And as soon as she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but running in, she told that Peter stood before the gate. But they said to her: Thou art mad. But she affirmed that it was so. Then said they: It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking. And when they had opened, they saw him, and were astonished. But he beckoning to them with his hand to hold their peace, told how the Lord had brought him out of prison, and he said: Tell these things to James and to the brethren. And being gone out, he went into another place.

An awful death soon after carried off Herod. On a certain day he sat in judgment upon an affair of the Tyrians and Sidonians; and, arrayed in kingly apparel, made an oration to them. And the people with acclamations cried out: It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And forthwith an angel of the Lord struck him, because he had not given the honour to God: and eaten up by worms, he expired.

CHAP. VIII. Paul and Barnabas preach at Antioch, Paphos, Iconium, and Lystra. The Lame Man healed.

AT Antioch it was now intimated by the Holy Ghost to the chief men in the Church, that Saul and Barnabas, then ministering in that city, should be set apart for some special work to which God had called them. With fasting and praying they therefore laid hands upon these two, and sent them away. Thus led by the Holy Ghost, Saul (now called Paul, a Roman name, Saul being a Jewish name,) and Barnabas went to Seleucia and Cyprus. At Paphos they were invited by Sergius

Paulus, the Roman proconsul, or governor, to preach before him. And a magician of the place, Elymas by name, vehemently opposed them, and was stricken with blindness at the word of Paul. And Sergius Paulus, recognising the power of God in the judgment executed by the hand of His servants, was converted to the faith of Christ.

From Paphos the Apostles went by Perge in Pamphilia to Antioch in Pisidia, where they made many converts among the Gentiles. The Jews, however, stirred up a persecution against them; and therefore, shaking off the dust of their feet as they went, as a token that they disowned and rejected them, they left Antioch, and went to Iconium. There they stayed some time, and preached with great power, and wrought many miracles; till the hatred of the Jews excited a riot in the town, which drove the Apostles away. They then went to Derbe and Lystra, cities of Lycaonia.

In Lystra they found a man who was impotent in his feet, and a cripple from his birth. This man heard Paul speak; and Paul, looking upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice: Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. And when the multitudes had seen what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice in the Lycaonian tongue, saying: The gods, in the likeness of men, are come down to us. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; but Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. The priest also of Jupiter, that was before the city, bringing oxen and garlands before the gate, would have offered sacrifice with the people. Which when the Apostles Barnabas and Paul had heard, rending their clothes, they ran among the people, crying out, and saying: O men, why do ye these things? We also are mortals, men like unto you, preaching to you to be converted from these vain things to the living God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them: who in past generations suffered all nations to walk in their own way. Nevertheless He left not Himself without testimony, doing good from

heaven, giving rains, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And speaking these things, they scarce restrained the people from sacrificing to them.

Now there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium ; and having persuaded the multitude, and having stoned Paul, they dragged him out of the city, thinking him to be dead. But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up and entered into the city, and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the Gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch ; confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith : for that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained for them priests in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they believed. And passing through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia. And having spoken the word of the Lord in Perge, they went down to Attalia : and thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been delivered to the grace of God, unto the work which they accomplished. And when they were arrived, and had assembled the Church, they related what great things God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

CHAP. IX. Paul and Silas at Philippi.

MANY of the Jewish converts were still not convinced that the ceremonial portion of the Mosaic law was not binding upon Christians ; and they attempted to force the Gentile converts to obey its regulations. While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch, some of these Jewish Christians came down from Jerusalem, and caused no small dissension, by declaring that unless the Gentile converts were circumcised, they could not be saved. At length, as they persisted in opposing the judgment

of the Apostles, Paul and Barnabas themselves, with some of the other side, went to lay the dispute before the Apostles and priests at Jerusalem.

A council was accordingly held, and after much discussion, Peter rose and gave his judgment against those who maintained the perpetual obligation of the law of Moses; and a letter conveying the decree was sent to Antioch by the hands of Barnabas and Paul, together with Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas. Its delivery caused great joy and peace among the brethren; and, after some stay, Paul said to Barnabas: Let us return and visit the brethren in all the cities wherein we have preached the word of the Lord, to see how they do. And Barnabas had a mind to take along with him John also, who was surnamed Mark. But Paul desired that he (as having departed from them out of Pamphylia, and not gone with them to the work) might not be received. And there was a dissension, so that they departed one from another, and Barnabas indeed having taken with him Mark, sailed to Cyprus. But Paul choosing Silas departed, being delivered by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches; commanding them to keep the precepts of the Apostles and the ancients.

At Lystra Paul found Timothy, a young disciple, the son of a Jewish woman, who was a Christian, and of a Gentile father. This young man, being well known for his rare piety and divine knowledge, Paul took with him; but, as he knew that the Jews would be prejudiced against him, as the son of a Gentile father, he circumcised him before departing. For, as he made himself all things to all men, so he was ready either to observe or to lay aside the ceremonial regulations of the Jewish law, as best might further the spread of the Gospel.

With Timothy he then went through Phrygia and the neighbouring countries to Troas, where a man of Macedonia appeared to him in a vision by night, saying: Pass over into Macedonia, and help us. Thence he went immediately to Philippi, a chief city of Macedonia,

where he lodged in the house of Lydia, a seller of purple, who, with her household, was baptised. There also he cast out an evil spirit from a girl, who made great gain for her masters by divination. And her masters seeing that the hope of their gain was gone, having apprehended Paul and Silas, they brought them into the market-place to the rulers; and presenting them to the magistrates, said: These men disturb our city, being Jews; and preach a fashion which it is not lawful for us to receive, nor observe, being Romans. And the people ran together against them: and their garments being torn off, the magistrates commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them securely. Who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and praised God: and they who were in prison heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened: and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison being awakened, and seeing the doors of the prison open, having drawn his sword, would have killed himself, imagining that the prisoners had fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying: Do thyself no harm, for we are all here. Then calling for a light, he went in, and trembling fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas: and bringing them out, he said: Masters, what must I do that I may be saved? And they said: Believe in the Lord Jesus: and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. And he taking them the same hour of the night, washed their wounds: and he was baptised, and presently all his family. And when he had brought them into his own house, he laid the table for them, and rejoiced with all his family, believing God. The next day the magistrates sent to let them go.

But Paul said to the messengers: After having

whipped us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, they sent us to prison : and now do they thrust us out privately? Not so : but let them come, and they themselves send us out. And the sergeants told these words to the magistrates. And they were afraid, having heard they were Romans ; and they came and besought them to depart in peace. And they went out of the prison and entered into the house of Lydia : and having seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

CHAP. X. Paul preaches at Athens.

PASSING through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul and Silas, with Timothy, came to Thessalonica and Berea, where they preached, till the Jews of the place, inflamed with anger, stirred up a riot, as they were accustomed in other places, to drive them away. Silas and Timothy, however, remained at Berea, while Paul went on to Athens. There his spirit was stirred within him, seeing the city wholly given to idolatry. And he disputed in the synagogue with the Jews, and with them that served God, and in the market-place, every day with those that were present. And some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers disputed with him, and some said : What is it that this babbler would say? But others : He seemeth to be a publisher of new gods : because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. And taking him, they brought him to the Areopagus, saying : May we know what this new doctrine is which thou speakest of? For thou bringest certain new things to our ears : we would know therefore what these things mean. (Now all the Athenians, and strangers that were there, employed themselves in nothing else but either in telling or in hearing some new thing.)

And Paul standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said : Ye men of Athens, I perceive that you are in all things as it were too superstitious. For passing by and seeing your idols, I found an altar also, on which was

written : TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore you worship without knowing it, this I preach to you. God who made the world and all things that are in it, He being the Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Nor is He served by the hands of men as though He needed any thing, seeing it is He who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things : and hath made of one, all mankind, to dwell upon the whole face of the earth, determining appointed times, and the limits of their habitation, that they should seek God, if haply they may feel after Him or find Him : although He be not far from every one of us : for in Him we live, and we move, and we are, as some also of your own poets said : for we are also His offspring. Being therefore the offspring of God, we must not suppose the Divinity to be like unto gold or silver, or stone, the graving of art and device of man. And God indeed, having overlooked the times of this ignorance, now declareth to men, that all should everywhere do penance. Because He hath appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world in equity, by the Man whom He hath appointed, giving faith to all, by raising Him up from the dead. And when they had heard of the resurrection of the dead, some indeed mocked : but others said : We will hear thee again concerning this matter. So Paul went out from among them. But certain men adhered to him, and believed : among whom was also Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

CHAP. XI. Paul confirms the Church at Ephesus. The tumult of the Silversmiths.

FROM Athens Paul journeyed to Corinth, where, notwithstanding the violent opposition of the Jews, he converted many ; and being strengthened by God in a vision, remained in the city, teaching the word of God, for a year and six months. At length the Jews carried him before the Roman governor Gallio, and accused him

of teaching men to worship God contrary to the laws. And when Paul was beginning to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews: If it were some matter of wrong, or a heinous deed, you men, O Jews, it would be reasonable I should bear with you. But if they be questions of a word and of names, and of your law, look you to it: I will not be judge of such matters. And he drove them from the judgment-seat. And all laying hold on Sosthenes the ruler of the synagogue, struck him before the judgment-seat: and Gallio cared for none of those things.

Paul then left Corinth, and departed for Ephesus, where, after another circuit near the coasts, he again returned, and baptised and confirmed the converts recently made. He preached in Ephesus for about two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, Jews and Gentiles. And God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul; so that even there were brought from his body to the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them. Now some of the Jewish exorcists, who went about, attempted to invoke, over them that had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying: I conjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were certain men, seven sons of Sceva a Jew, a chief priest, who did this. But an evil spirit answering, said to them: Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaping upon them, and mastering them both, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews and the Gentiles who dwelt at Ephesus: and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many of those who believed came confessing and declaring their deeds. And many of those who had followed curious things, brought their books together and burnt them before all: and the price of them being computed, they found the money to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily increased the word of God, and was confirmed.

At length a violent tumult arose in the city. A certain silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver temples for Diana, brought no small gain to the craftsmen : whom having called together, with workmen of like occupation, he said : You men, you know that our gain is by this trade : now you see and hear that this Paul by persuasion hath drawn away a great multitude, not only at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, saying : That they are no gods which are made with hands. So that not only this our craft is in danger to be vilified, but also the temple of great Diana shall be thought nothing of, yea, and her majesty shall begin to be destroyed whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. Having heard these things they were full of anger, and cried out, saying : Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And the whole city was filled with confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, companions of Paul. And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. And some also of the rulers of Asia, who were his friends, sent unto him, desiring that he would not venture himself into the theatre. Now some cried out one thing, some another ; for the assembly was confused, and the greater part knew not for what cause they were come together. And they drew forth Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews thrusting him forward. And Alexander, beckoning with his hand for silence, would have given the people satisfaction. But as soon as they perceived him to be a Jew, all with one voice, for the space of about two hours, cried out : Great is Diana of the Ephesians. In the end the tumult was appeased ; and Paul, having exhorted the disciples, took his leave, and set forth to go to Macedonia.

CHAP. XII. Paul's Discourse to the Clergy of Ephesus.

PAUL now passed through Macedonia and many parts of Greece. At Troas he raised to life a young man named

Eutychus, who was oppressed with sleep, while Paul was long preaching, and fell from a great height and was killed. At Philetus he sent to Ephesus, and called the ancients of the Church. And he said to them : You know from the first day that I came into Asia, in what manner I have been with you all the time, serving the Lord with all humility, and with tears, and temptations which came upon me from the snares of the Jews : how I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have preached it to you, and taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and Gentiles penance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, bound in the spirit, I go to Jerusalem ; not knowing the things that shall befall me there : only that the Holy Ghost in every city witnesseth to me, saying : That chains and afflictions wait for me at Jerusalem. But I fear none of these things : neither do I count my life more precious than myself, so that I may consummate my course, and the ministry of the word which I have received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that all you, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to witness this day, that I am clear from the blood of all. For I have not been wanting to declare to you all the counsel of God. Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. I know that, after my departure, ravenous wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And of your own selves will rise up men speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, keeping in memory, that for three years I ceased not night and day, with tears admonishing every one of you. And now I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, who is able to build up, and to give an inheritance among all the sanctified. I have not coveted any man's silver, gold, or apparel, as you yourselves know : that as for such things as were needful for me, and for

them that are with me, these hands have furnished. I have shewed you all things, that labouring in this manner, we must receive the weak, and remember the word of the Lord Jesus, how He said: It is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had said these things, kneeling down, he prayed with them all. And there was much weeping among them all: and falling on Paul's neck, they kissed him, being very much grieved for the word which he had said, that they should see his face no more. And they conducted him to the ship.

CHAP. XIII. Paul goes to Jerusalem, and is apprehended by the Jews in the Temple.

FROM Miletus, Paul, now accompanied by Luke, went on to Tyre, where he was gladly received by the disciples. From thence they went to Cesarea, and lodged seven days with Philip the Evangelist, one of the seven deacons, who had four daughters, virgins, who were endowed with the gift of prophecy. And while they were there, there came from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come to them, he took Paul's girdle: and binding his own feet and hands, he said: These things saith the Holy Ghost: The man whose girdle this is, thus shall the Jews bind in Jerusalem, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. Then they all began to entreat him not to go to Jerusalem. But he would not hear, and said that he was ready not only to be bound, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus. And they ceased their importunity, and said: The will of the Lord be done.

And when they reached Jerusalem, the brethren received them gladly. And they told Paul that the Jewish converts were strongly prejudiced against him, because they had heard that he spoke against the observance of circumcision, and the other ceremonies of the Mosaic law. By their advice, therefore, in order to shew the Jewish Christians that though he did not enforce obe-

dience to the law of Moses, yet he did not forbid it, he joined himself to four men who had made a certain vow, and in fulfilling it observing all the rules prescribed by the law. Nevertheless, though the Jewish Christians were thus satisfied, the unbelieving Jews soon stirred up a tumult, and persuaded the multitude that Paul took the Gentiles into the temple. And the whole city was in an uproar: and there was a concourse of people. And having seized on Paul, they drew him out of the temple: and immediately the doors were shut. And as they were seeking to kill him, it was told the tribune of the band: That all Jerusalem was in confusion. Who forthwith, taking with him soldiers and centurions, ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they left off beating Paul. Then the tribune coming near took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains: and demanded who he was, and what he had done. And some cried out one thing, some another, among the multitude. And when he could not know the certainty because of the tumult, he commanded him to be brought into the castle. And when he was come to the stairs, it happened that he was borne up by the soldiers, because of the violence of the people. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out: Away with him. And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he said to the tribune: May I speak something to thee? Who said: Canst thou speak Greek? Art not thou that Egyptian who before these days didst raise a tumult, and didst lead forth into the desert four thousand men that were murderers? But Paul said to him: I am indeed a Jew, a man of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city. And I beseech thee, permit me to speak to the people. And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with his hand to the people.

And when Paul began to speak to them in the Hebrew tongue, they were more than before disposed to listen to him, and for a time they heard him patiently, while he related the history of his conversion, till he told them how God had sent him to preach the Gospel

to the Gentiles. Then they were filled with fury, and cried out for his death. And the tribune had him brought into the castle, that he might be scourged and tortured. But Paul demanded to be spared this torment because he was a Roman citizen, as it was unlawful to scourge any free-born Roman uncondemned. He was therefore kept in prison, and the next day was brought before the Jewish council and the high priest Ananias for judgment.

CHAP. XIV. Paul before the Council, and before Felix.

AND Paul stood before the council and said: Men, brethren, I have conversed with an entire good conscience before God until this present day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them who stood by him, to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him: God shall strike thee, thou whited wall. For, sittest thou there to judge me according to the law, and contrary to the law commandest me to be struck? And they that stood by, said: Dost thou revile the high priest of God? And Paul said: I knew not, brethren, that he is the high priest. For it is written: Thou shalt not speak evil of the prince of thy people.

Then Paul, knowing that the Jews were divided into two parties, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the former of whom would take part with him against the latter on the doctrine of the resurrection, cried aloud: Men, brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees: concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had said this, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. Now a great clamour was raised. And some of the Pharisees rising up, contended, saying: We find no evil in this man: what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel? And when there arose a great dissension, the tribune, fearing lest Paul

should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle. And the night following, the Lord standing by him, said: Be constant: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

And when it was day, some of the Jews assembled together, and bound themselves with a curse, saying: That they would neither eat nor drink, till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty men that had made this conspiracy. And they came to the chief priests and the ancients, and said: We have bound ourselves under a curse that we will eat nothing till we kill Paul. Now, therefore, do you with the council signify to the tribune, that he bring him forth to you, as if you meant to know something more certain concerning him: and we, before he come near, are ready to kill him. And when Paul's sister's son had heard of their lying in wait, he came, and entered into the castle, and told Paul. Then Paul, calling to him one of the centurions, said: Bring this young man to the tribune; for he hath something to tell him. So he took him, and brought him to the tribune, and said: Paul the prisoner desired me to bring this young man to thee, who hath something to say to thee. And the tribune taking him by the hand, went aside with him privately, and asked him: What is it that thou hast to tell me? And he said: The Jews have agreed to desire thee, that thou wouldst bring forth Paul to-morrow into the council, as if they meant to inquire something more certain concerning him. But do not thou give credit to them: for there lie in wait for him more than forty men of them, who have bound themselves by oath neither to eat nor to drink till they kill him: and they are now ready waiting for thy promise. The tribune therefore dismissed the young man, charging him to tell no man that he had made known these things to him.

The tribune then immediately sent off Paul, guarded by a strong band of soldiers, to Felix, the chief Roman governor at Cesarea, with a letter explaining who he

was, and what he was accused of by the Jews. Five days afterwards the high priest Ananias, with other Jews, followed Paul to Cesarea, and accused him before Felix as a disturber of the peace of the country. Paul answered them by declaring his innocence of the crime laid to his charge; and Felix, who had married a Jewish wife, and knew well the falsehood of the accusation, dismissed the accusers for a while, and kept Paul in prison, treating him at the same time with gentleness. After some days he sent for him, to hear him speak of the faith of Jesus Christ. And as he treated of justice, and chastening, and of the judgment to come, Felix being terrified, answered: For this time go thy way: but at a convenient time I will send for thee. Hoping also, withal, that money would be given him by Paul: for which account he also frequently sent for him, and spoke with him. But two years passed by, and Felix, though convinced, remained unconverted; and when Festus came to be governor in his place, desirous of gratifying the Jews, he left Paul a prisoner still.

CHAP. XV. Paul before Agrippa.

SOON after Festus entered on his government, the Jews renewed their accusations against Paul; and Festus, to gratify them, asked Paul whether he would return to Jerusalem, and there be tried. But Paul appealed to Cesar, the Roman emperor, insisting upon his privileges as a Roman citizen, and demanded to be judged by him. This favour Festus could not refuse him; and he was kept in prison until he could be sent to Rome. A short time afterwards, Agrippa, the Roman governor, or king, over another portion of the province of Judea, arrived at Cesarea, to congratulate Festus on his arrival. To him Festus spoke concerning Paul and his accusers. Agrippa wished to hear Paul himself; and the next day the Apostle was brought into the hall of audience, where Agrippa, with his wife Bernice, and Festus, were prepared with great pomp to listen to his defence. And

Paul, when he was permitted to speak, recounted, as before, the history of his past life, and his conversion ; declaring that he now stood a witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And as he said this, Festus cried with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself ; much learning doth make thee mad. And Paul said : I am not mad, most excellent Festus ; but I speak words of truth and sobriety. For the king knoweth of these things, to whom also I speak with confidence : for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him. For neither were any of these things done in a corner. Believest thou the prophets, O King Agrippa ? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said to Paul : In a little thou persuadest me to become a Christian. And Paul said : I would to God that, both in little and in much, not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, should become such as I also am, except these chains. And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them. And when they were gone aside, they conferred with one another, saying : This man hath done nothing that deserveth death or chains. And Agrippa said to Festus : This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed to Cesar.

CHAP. XVI. Paul's Voyage. His Shipwreck, and arrival at Rome.

It being now determined that Paul should go to Rome, he was sent with other prisoners by sea. They sailed by Cyprus and Crete, where the weather became so tempestuous, that Paul counselled them to put into harbour for a time ; but his advice was overruled ; and at length, after an incessant storm of three days and nights, all hope of safety seemed lost ; and captain and sailors despaired of their lives. But Paul bade them take courage ; for an angel of God had appeared to him, and assured him that though they would be shipwrecked on

a certain island, and the ship would be lost, every man's life would be saved. On the fourteenth night of the storm, they found that they were coming into shallow waters; and the sailors, by the Apostle's advice to the captain, being compelled to remain in the ship, they cast anchor, took some food, and waited for the day. When the morning broke, the ship being lightened, they ran her ashore. The soldiers then wished to kill the prisoners, to prevent their escaping; but the commander, in order to save Paul, forbade it; and the whole crew, with the prisoners, in all 276 persons, reached the shore in safety.

When they were landed, they discovered that they were upon the island of Melita, now called Malta. And the barbarian inhabitants treated them with great kindness, and kindled a fire to warm and dry them. And Paul himself gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire; and, as he did it, a viper sprung out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the people saw the venomous reptile hanging upon him, they cried out that he must be a murderer, pursued by Divine vengeance. But Paul shook off the viper into the fire; and seeing him remain unhurt, they were amazed, and took him for a god.

After this, they were well received by the chief persons in the island; Paul wrought many miracles on the sick; curing, among others, the father of Publius, the governor of the place. They remained three months altogether, and then sailed for Rome. There Paul was leniently treated by the Roman authorities, and was permitted to live in a house of his own, in the custody of a soldier, who lived with him. For two years he preached both to Jews and Gentiles, and made many converts, no man hindering. After this time he was set at liberty; but the Holy Scriptures give no further account of his life, except such circumstances as are mentioned in his own Epistles to the different Christian Churches. From them, and from other sources, we learn that some time after he was altogether free, he made a second journey among the Christians in Asia,

and finally returned to Rome, where his preaching was crowned with glorious results; the last of which was his own martyrdom. He was beheaded by command of the Emperor Nero.

THE END.

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